

GIANT FULL-COLOR PINUP OF HARLEY RACE

January 1984  
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# PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

*Dean Tucker*

T.V.  
SPORTS

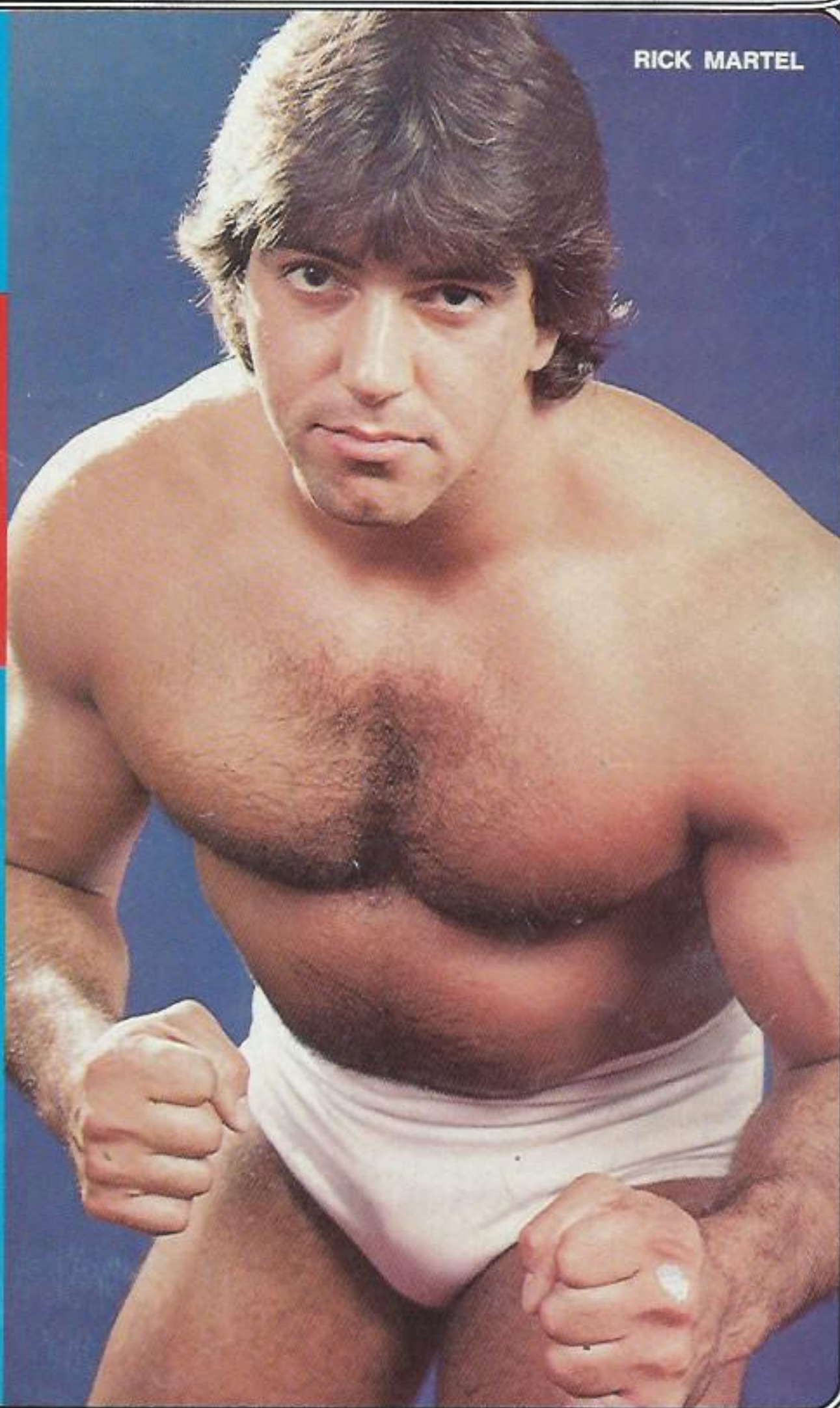
Special Fan Ballot:  
VOTE FOR 1983's  
BEST WRESTLERS  
AND GREATEST  
ACHIEVEMENTS

IS AWA  
WRESTLING  
TOO TOUGH  
FOR  
RICK MARTEL?

The Anger Of Snuka,  
Putski, and Santana:  
"BOB BACKLUND  
LIED TO US!"

Exclusive Coverage:  
THE FREEBIRDS  
REGAIN THE  
SIX-MAN TAG  
TEAM TITLE  
FROM THE  
VON ERICHS

RICK MARTEL





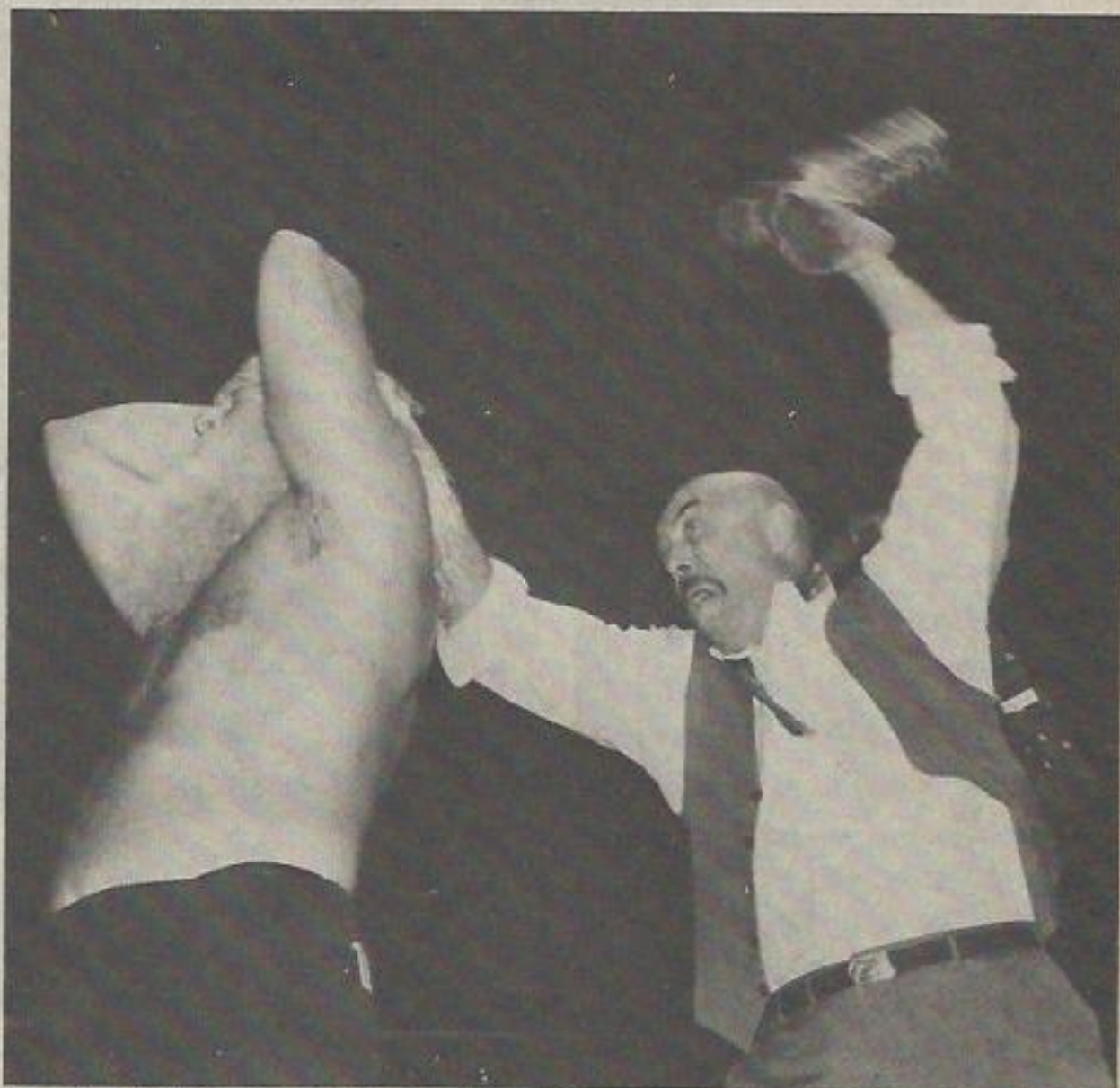
# RINGSIDE

With Bill Apter

**I**T WAS A sad night for fans in Greensboro, North Carolina. Due to **Gary Hart's** interference, which went unnoticed by referee **Tommy Young**, **Kabuki** was able to score a victory over **Jimmy Valiant** in a Loser Leave Town Match. Fans throughout the arena cried as they realized that Valiant, their favorite, would have to leave the Mid-Atlantic area.

A few days later, a new competitor, a man in a half-mask sporting a full beard and calling himself **Charlie Brown**, appeared in the Mid-Atlantic. He looks like he might be Valiant, but so far that has not been confirmed. When asked to tell us something about his background, he said, "All you've gotta know is that I'm Charlie Brown, the new man in town, and that's all I can say, brother!"

**Dusty Rhodes** pinned **Harley Race** in Tampa, Florida, but due to a technicality, "The American Dream" did not win his third NWA World title. After several minutes of close, grueling action, Dusty trapped Race in a sleeperhold. Harley tried to reach for the ropes, but realizing the futility of the attempt, he smashed his fist into the face of guest referee **Dick Kroll**, knocking him senseless. At that point, Florida referee **Bill Alphonso** came into the ring to officiate for the injured Kroll. Dusty let Race loose, powerslammed him, and pinned his shoulders for the three-count. Dusty took the belt home with him thinking he had become NWA World champion, but



Gary Hart slams the heel of his boot against the back of Jimmy Valiant's head, enabling his charge, Kabuki, to win a Loser Leave Town Match. Hart's interference occurred while referee Tommy Young was blinded by Kabuki's green fog.

when he arrived at the Tampa Sportatorium the next morning for the television tapings, NWA officials confiscated the belt. Kroll appeared on the television program and explained to host **Gordon Solie** that Race had earned an automatic disqualification for hitting him. As a result, Alphonso's count meant nothing at all.

A depressed Rhodes left the studio as Race came on the air and boasted, "I was never in trouble. To prove how great I am, I challenge any wrestler in this building

to wrestle me on TV." **Barry Windham** accepted the challenge and, only minutes later, he too pinned Race's shoulders to the mat. Once again, however, the belt had been saved by a technicality as no official match contract had been signed. NWA champion Harley Race was pinned *twice in 12 hours* and he still has the belt. Amazing!

**Mr. Saito** has a new friend in the AWA, a young man by the name of **David "Redneck" Shultz**. "We were talking one day  
(Continued on page 54)



# KING'S COURT

By Peter King

**L**EANING HIS HEAD against the cinder-block wall in his dressing room, John Studd closed his eyes and sighed. Sweat ran down his face, was captured by his beard for a few seconds, and then dripped onto his chest. Studd appeared to be enjoying the cool of the concrete on his overheated head. It was the first time he had been able to relax all day.

"Andre..." Studd muttered under his breath. "Andre, Andre, Andre. Every night, it's Andre. You'd think the fans would be tired of it by now."

Studd had just come from the arena, where he had battled Andre the Giant to a time-limit draw. And, in fact, Studd has been wrestling Andre at least six times a month recently. Up and down the Northeast, the battle of the summer has been John Studd vs. Andre the Giant.

On this night, Studd, after showering and relaxing for a while, was more talkative than I had ever seen him. Perhaps it was because manager Fred Blassie was out of town on business. Or maybe it was because Studd had

earned a draw with Andre. And since nobody has ever defeated Andre, gaining a draw with the Giant is one of wrestling's greatest accomplishments.

"People don't realize how brutal it is to wrestle Andre," Studd said while packing his equipment bag. "It's not that he's the strongest human being on earth. Hey, muscle for muscle, I'm better developed than he is. And it's not the weight or the height. It's everything!"

Studd was preparing to put a blood- and sweat-soaked towel into his bag, but seemed to think better of it. Instead, he offered to give it to me as a souvenir, a gesture I thanked him for but declined to accept. Studd tossed the towel into the garbage pail in the corner of his dressing room.

"People come to the arenas expecting to see something amazing from Andre. And sometimes they do. But what the fans don't understand is that what makes Andre so great is not anything flashy. It's really the fundamentals of wrestling. Look, the match begins, and Andre comes out of his corner. And for the first 10 or 15 minutes, he just leans on his opponent. That may not sound like much, but you try and win a match after carrying a 450-pound weight around for 10 minutes. He uses his weight and height so well, and he's so damn big, there's no getting away from him. It's like being smothered. After 30 minutes of wrestling Andre, you're not so much hurt as you are dog tired."

Studd shook his head and grinned, almost admiring the way that Andre wins his matches. "In a sense, I do respect the guy," Studd admitted. "He's got a style that works. And no one has ever beaten him—yet."

Studd has come very close to defeating the Giant on a few occasions. Of course, Studd has had to absorb a lot of punishment, and even a loss here and there. But he remains convinced he can pull off wrestling's greatest upset.

"I almost had him tonight," Studd said. "One more elbowdrop or legdrop and I know I would've had him. But

(Continued on page 56)



Realizing that in every match there is at least a brief opportunity for victory, Fred Blassie continues to send Big John Studd into battle against Andre the Giant.



# DRESSING CONFIDENTIAL ROOM

By Stu Saks

**T**ED DiBIASE and I are speaking again. It's not as it used to be. Ted and I were very close friends not too long ago. When Ted abandoned his scientific style, however, he abandoned his friends as well.

After Ted became a rulebreaker, he refused to speak to me even on a professional level. If he thought that I would have tried to talk him out of his new lifestyle, that I would stoop so low as to forsake my professionalism for even a moment, well, then he thought right! With all due respect to those who tried to teach me to be an objective, detached journalist, yes, I would have tried to talk DiBiase into returning to the way he was. Ted was worth it. He was a fine scientific wrestler, but even more important, he was a super human being. I realize that's an overused description, but in Ted's case it was accurate. There was nothing that he wouldn't do for you.

I remember one day in particular, before we had really solidified our friendship, I had to file a story for the magazine at deadline, which meant that I had to file the story by phone from the arena as soon as the matches were over. I set up my typewriter in the press room and prepared to do my story without the benefit of quotes. I simply didn't have enough time to go the wrestlers' dressing rooms, do the

interviews, and come back to write my story. To my surprise and delight, Ted DiBiase went into the individual dressing rooms and dragged the wrestlers over to me, one by one. Ted stayed in the arena an hour late just to make sure I had all the quotes I needed.

Our friendship began that night and grew steadily. Until last year, when Ted decided that being a good person would not help him become a wrestling champion, as if that's the most important thing in the world. Ted, I believe, was so unsure of himself while we was making the transition from fan favorite to rulebreaker that he couldn't bear to face the people

who might add to that insecurity.

The fact that Ted is now talking to me is a bad sign. If he's willing to talk to me, that means that he no longer has any doubts about his new attitude. He no longer fears that someone will try to talk him into changing. I could say all I want to to DiBiase and never get through to him. But there is one man from Ted's past who still affects him to this day.

\*\*\*

For this interview, I met DiBiase at a bar. As good friends as Ted and I were, we never went to bars together. Neither of us are really bar people. When Ted told me to meet him at a bar, I feared that his change had taken him to even further depths. Fortunately I was

(Continued on page 57)

Ted DiBiase and Mr. Wrestling II: both exhausted after their memorable scientific struggle.



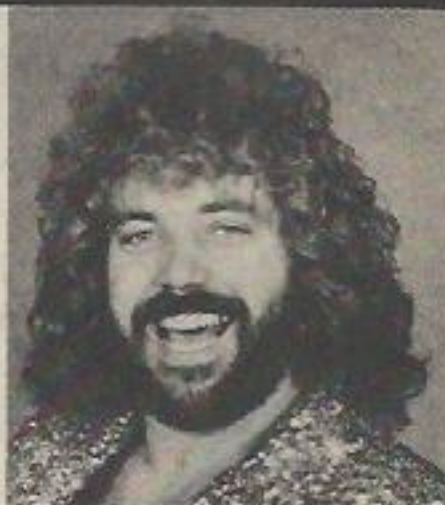


# WHAT THEY ARE SAYING

Every month, our reporters will compile wrestlers' most revealing quotes. Often catching the grapplers with their guards down, our reporters will work endlessly in obtaining interesting quotes on a variety of subjects.

## JIM GARVIN

"Can you believe that any man in the year 1983 would actually spank a woman? The Von Erichs must be stuck in a time warp or something. This isn't 1921. Men don't own women. Women are human beings, not playthings. I'm disgusted by their actions, and if I were Sunshine, I would take them to court."



## GEN. SKANDOR AKBAR

"No one man has yet to score a decisive victory over my Ugandan giant. Kamala is the most savage individual in professional wrestling today. I dare any man to challenge him and leave the ring without an injury. Kamala is a living terror."



## BILL ALPHONSO

"I've have officiated a lot of matches in the two years I have been working in Florida, but I have never seen a match as brutal as the Bullrope Match between Dusty Rhodes and Ron Bass. With J. J. Dillon's help, Bass has turned into a madman. This feud might never end."



## TOMMY RICH

"I don't think that damned Buzz Sawyer will ever learn that going out there on TV and making a fool out of himself, screaming and yelling and making his face turn all red, is not gonna make him a popular guy. People think he's crazy. I wouldn't be surprised if sooner or later someone came into the TV studio and took him away in a white truck."





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**TED DiBIASE**

"I couldn't be happier. I lost that Loser Leave Town Match to Jim Duggan on purpose. Seriously, did you think a fool like Duggan could actually beat me in a ring, let alone in a cage? I wanted to get out of all my contracts. I'm sick of Mid-South Wrestling and I'm sick of these stupid fans. I wanted out!"



---

**BUGSY McGRAW**

"I was walking around in Greensboro the other day . . . or was it last year . . . and I saw this dog and his leash was tied to a parking meter, so I went over and put another nickel in the meter so he could stay there longer. The dog thanked me. He didn't have any change."



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**JERRY LAWLER**

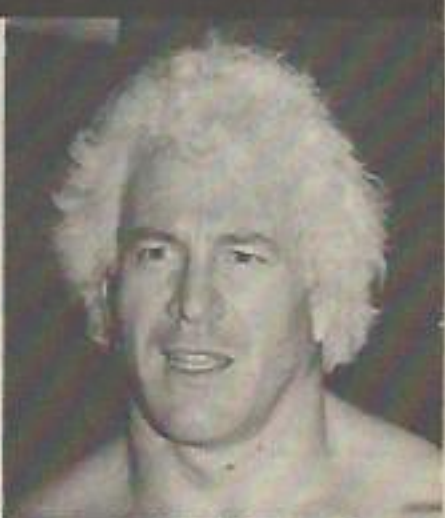
"I've been preoccupied with Nick Bockwinkel for most of the year. So much so that I've ignored the fans right here in my home state of Tennessee. But I'm trying to make it up to them. There's a lot going on here that needs my attention, and I plan to pay attention to those things until they are straightened out."



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**KEN PATERA**

"I've been taking a lot of abuse for accepting Sheik Al-Kaissie's money. Do you know how I deal with it? Whenever I have to listen to this crap, I think about the new redwood deck and hot tub in my backyard, the new trophy case in my den, the new car in my driveway, the new sauna installed in my house . . ."



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**MAGNIFICENT MURACO**

"Brother Snuka, I hope you can see now why I am the Magnificent Muraco. You have now felt my magnificence in the ring, and now you will have to admit to yourself, brother, that I am truly the magnificent one. I am the WWF Intercontinental champion, and I will always be the better man."





# A—ON— ASSIGNMENT

BY LIZ HUNTER

**P**ART OF THE job of Associate Editor Craig Peters is to sort through all the mail that comes to the editorial offices each day. It's not a very difficult task, but it is time-consuming. Literally hundreds of letters pour into the offices daily.

When I dropped by the office a couple of weeks ago, I noticed that Craig was in the middle of his mail-sorting task. There was one particularly large pile of letters on the corner of his desk.

"What's all that?" I asked.

"You wouldn't believe it, Liz," Craig replied, "those are all letters about the incident where David Von Erich spanked Jim Garvin's valet, Sunshine."

I couldn't believe it. The pile of mail was at least twice the height of any other pile on his desk.

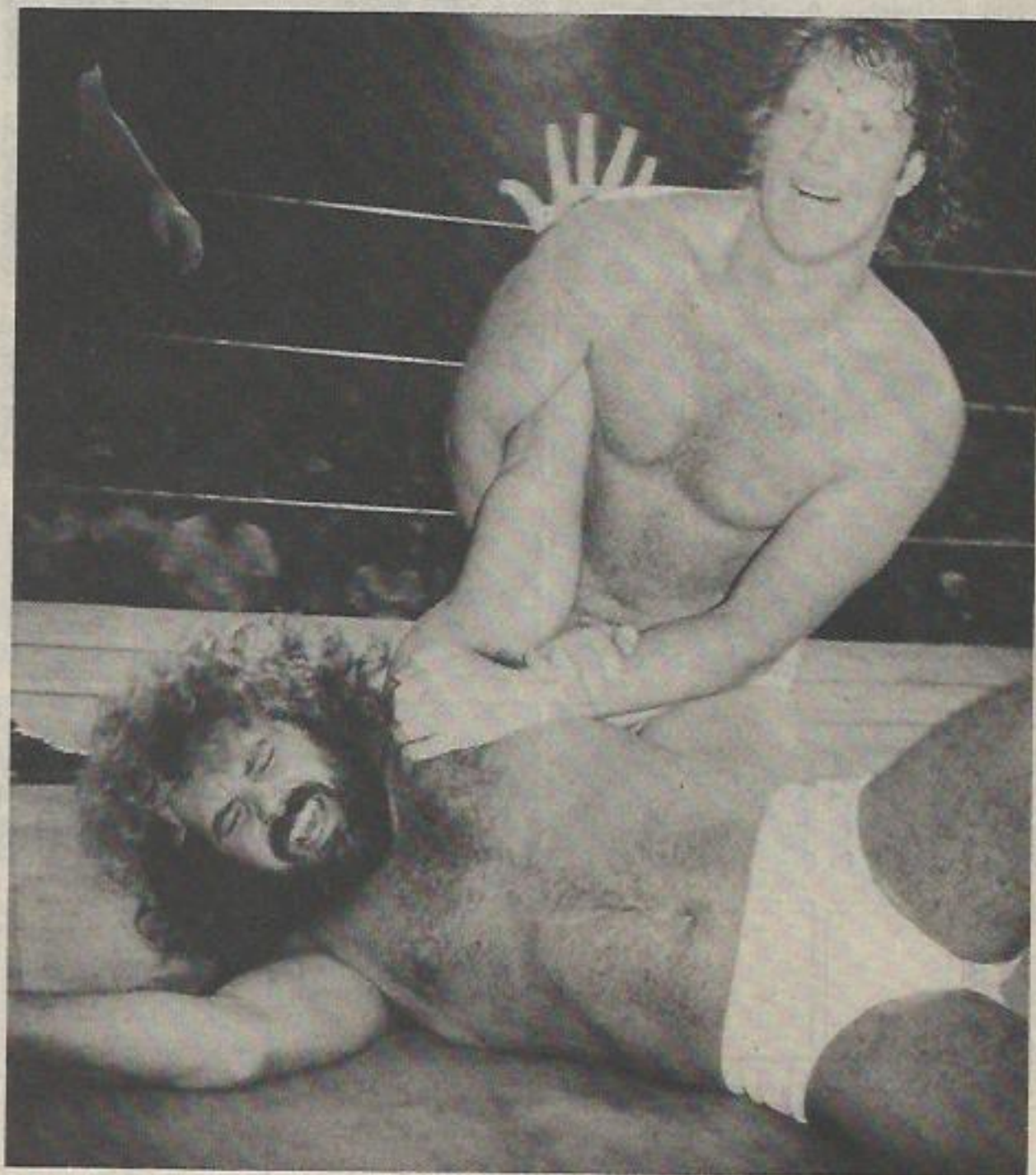
"What's the prevailing opinion?" I asked.

"Well, it seems that most of the fans who've heard about the incident are in support of David," Craig noted, "but a good number of them, maybe as many as 30 percent, say that David should be ashamed of himself for having hit a woman."

I smiled. Jerry Lawler can piledrive wrestlers all across the state of Tennessee and nobody will sit up and take notice, but just let a 250-pound wrestler spank a woman and the letter writers of the world spring into immediate action.

"Have you talked to David about this incident yet?" Craig asked. I replied that I hadn't, but it seemed like a good idea.

Steve Farhood (now a *PWT* spe-



David Von Erich keeps a watchful eye on Sunshine at ringside as he applies an armbar on Gorgeous Jim Garvin. For a woman of 120 pounds, Sunshine can cause a lot of trouble for Garvin's opponents.

cial investigator) was out to lunch, so I used his office. I dialed David Von Erich's number. The phone rang seven times. I was just about to give up when a tired voice answered he phone. I commented to David that he seemed exhausted.

"You don't know the half of it, Liz," David said, taking quick, deep breaths between almost every word. "I've been working out for two hours straight. I'm bushed.

What's up?"

I said that I wanted to talk about the Sunshine incident.

"Oh no, Liz, not you too!"

David had obviously been through this several times before.

"That happened weeks ago, and as far as I'm concerned it's past history," David said. "What's the big deal? You would think I'd sent her into the hospital with brain

(Continued on page 58)



If you wish to contribute to Shocket's mailbag, send your letters to:

**TOP ROPE**  
Box 48  
Rockville Centre, NY  
11571

# OFF THE O ROPE

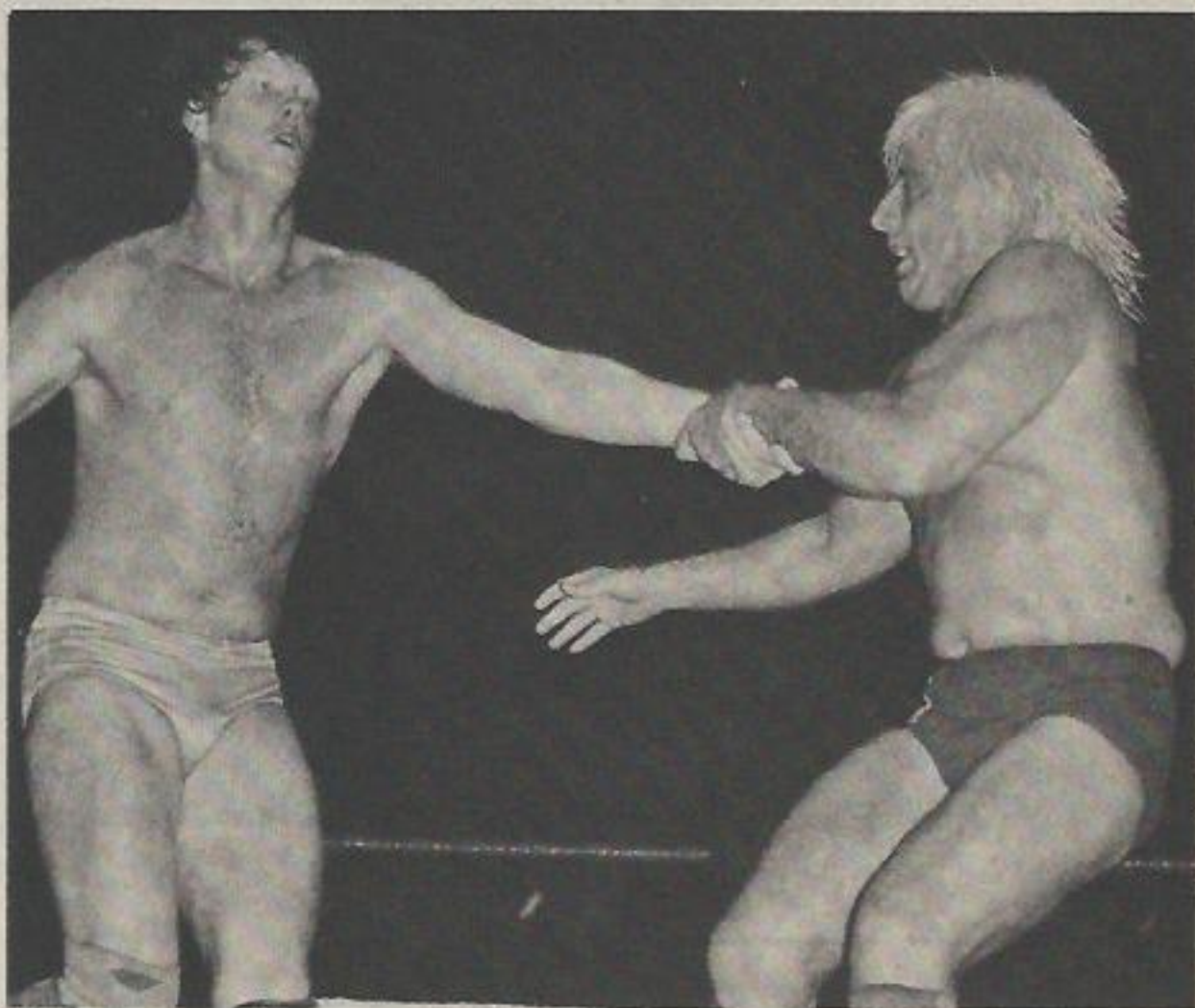
By Dan Shocket

**T**HIS MONTH'S COLUMN is devoted to fans' reactions to the recently concluded title reign of Ric Flair. But before we begin, I'd like to congratulate Steve Ward. As many fans angrily remember, Steve wrote a delightful little poem that I printed in my October 1983 column pointing out the all-too-obvious faults of Tommy Rich. The reaction was astonishing. An avalanche of letters from Rich fans soon arrived. Steve, you should be proud of the boorish and inconsequential insults hurled at you. They prove you're a perceptive wrestling fan and a poet with his finger on the public pulse.

Dear Dan,

I think Ric Flair is one of the greatest stars of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. A champ for one year year, eight months, 24 days, Flair battled hundreds of top contenders from the four corners of the world. He wrestled in 27 different countries.

Ric's skills at brawling and scientific wrestling, plus his drive and determination, will allow him to regain the title.



I'll be behind him 100 percent from start to finish. So hats off to Ric "Nature Boy" Flair.

JIMMY FRAENKEL  
Williamsville, NY

Dear Dan,

I think Ric Flair's reign as champion was too short. I have never had the pleasure of seeing him

wrestle in person, but I've had the pleasure of watching him several times on cable television. He is the most impressive champion since Buddy Rogers. Not only is he awesome in the ring, he conducts himself as only a champion should outside the squared circle.

GARY R. CROSBEE  
Colonia, NJ



Dear Dan,

I think Ric Flair's reign was a very successful one. I think Flair was the best NWA champion in the last 20 years. I think his loss to Race was simply a fluke!

When Flair puts his mind to regaining the title, he will. Ric Flair is soon to be a two-time NWA champion.

KEVIN HOPKINS  
New Rochelle, NY

Dear Mr. Shocket,

I didn't start out being a Ric Flair fan. I hated him. Why? Because I saw only the flashy side, the macho chauvanist bragging about the ladies.

On April 11, 1983, Ric came to the West Palm Beach arena to meet Dusty Rhodes. I went to root Rhodes on. When Flair came down the aisle, he was decked out in a red robe—flashy, sexy, handsome, but can he wrestle? As he passed me, I wished him good luck. Seemingly surprised, he stopped and thanked me.

The match was the most exciting hour of wrestling I'd ever seen. What's more, I found myself standing and cheering for Ric Flair! Every move Rhodes could make, Flair had two better moves to



In his nearly two years as NWA World champion, Flair took on all worthy challengers. Opposite page: Flair flings David Von Erich across the ring. Above: Ric made several successful defenses against Harley Race, the man who eventually took his title. Below left: Flair locks the arm of former two-time NWA champion Dusty Rhodes.

counter it. At the end of the hour, Flair had deservedly retained his belt.

As he came back down the aisle, having a hard time balancing himself and catching his breath, I again smiled at him. He stopped, smiled back, and thanked me and my daughter for being his fans.

Ric is still a champion, belt or no belt. I would travel anywhere on any given night to watch him wrestle.

Thank you, Ric, for choosing wrestling and not some office job.

DEBRA S. MOBLEY  
Lantana, FL

Dear Dan:

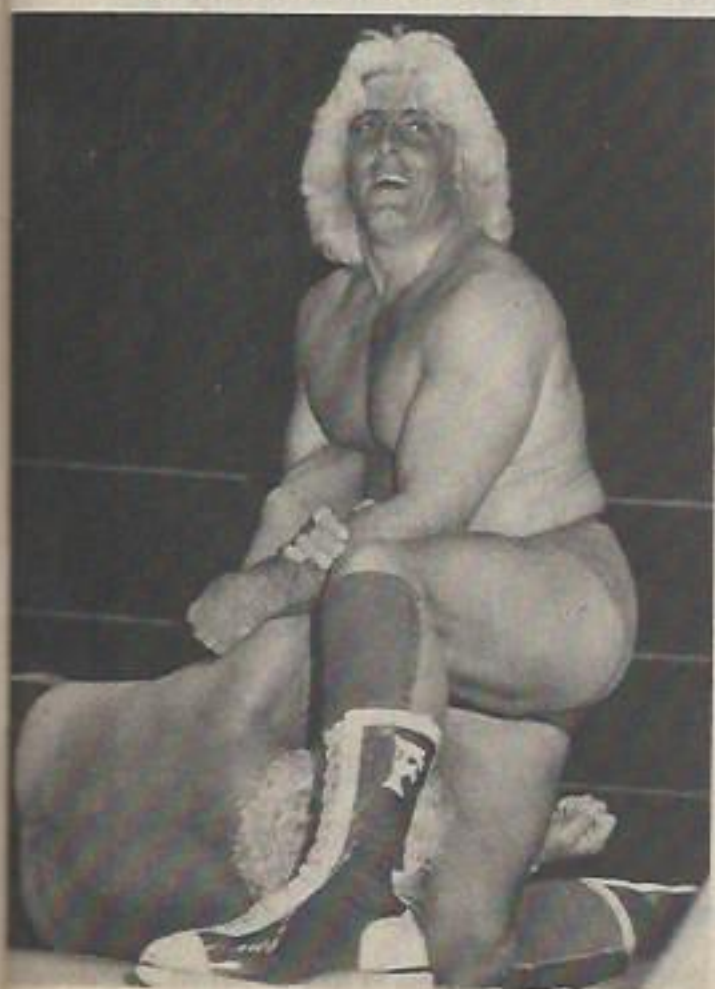
In these days, outward appearance and basic character mean a

lot. In order to be respected in any profession, one must have a certain quality that sets him apart from everyone else. As champion, Ric Flair had that quality.

I would have to say without doubt Ric Flair was the greatest world champion any wrestling alliance, association, or federation could ever hope to have. Not only was he a tremendous champion, giving title shots to *anyone* he felt worthy, but his private life away from wrestling was something most of us only dream about.

He gives more class to the words "world champion" than any other man in the history of the sport.

CATHY NOGGLE  
Des Plaines, IL □

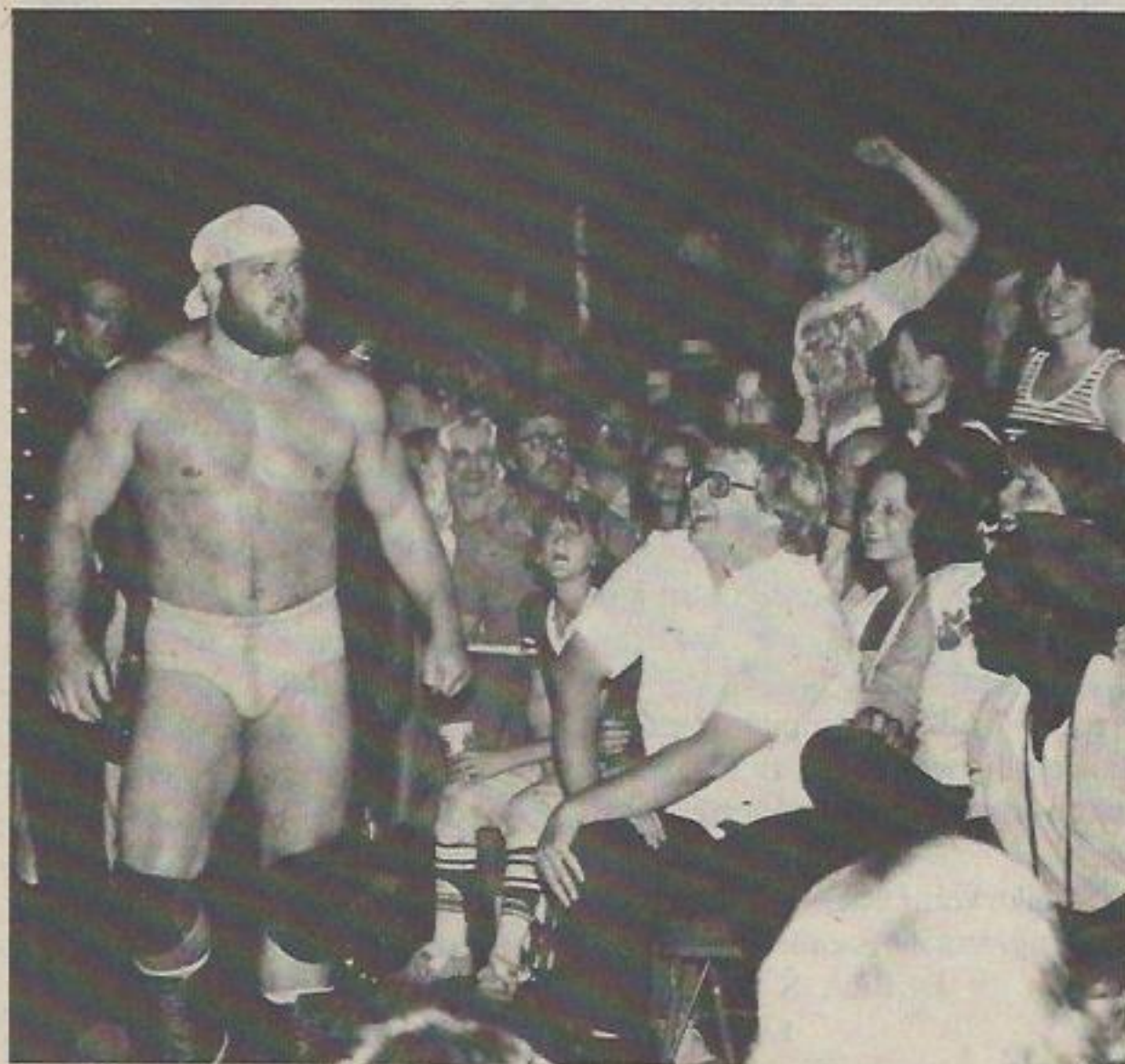




**Every issue, three reporters from PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED will participate in an incisive press conference with a top wrestling star. The questions will be demanding. And the answers will reveal the innermost thoughts of the giants of the sport**

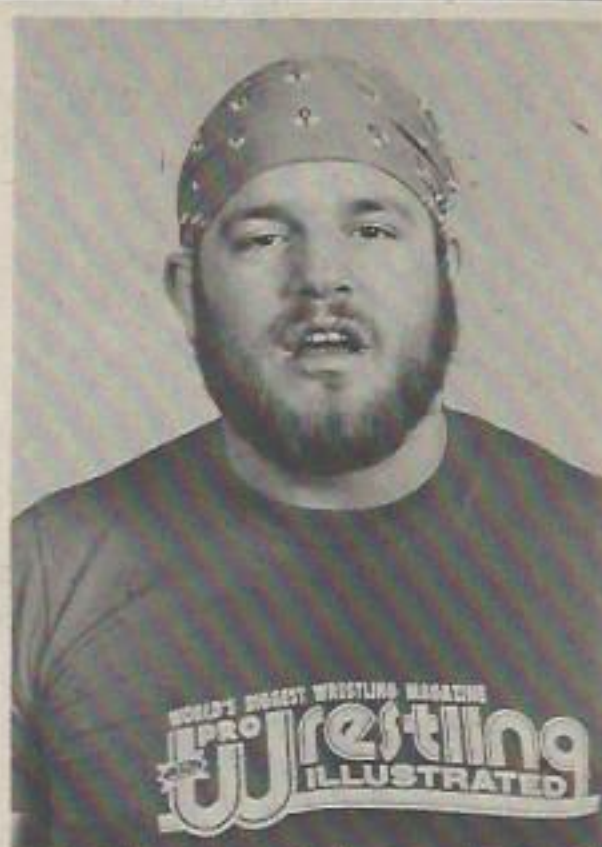
# PRESS CONFERENCE

BUZZ SAWYER



("Mad Dog" Buzz Sawyer gained national prominence more than a year ago when he became locked in a bitter, bloody feud with Tommy "Wildfire" Rich. It was a feud that shocked and stunned the wrestling world, not only because of its intense level of violence, but because of its length of time as well. Since that time, Sawyer has become somewhat of a "spoiler," taking on any wrestler in the the Georgia area whom the fans support. His recent opponents have included Pistol Pez Whatley, Roddy Piper, Dick Murdoch, and, of course, Tommy Rich. Editor-in-Chief Peter King, Managing Editor Stu Saks, and Associate Editor Craig Peters recently spoke with Sawyer prior to a wrestling card in Altoona, Pennsylvania.)





**"I enjoyed battering Piper's head with the chain, yeah, and I enjoyed the taste of my own blood and spitting it right into Piper's face, hahaha."**

PETER KING: In the December issue of our sister publication *The Wrestler*, Roddy Piper was quoted as saying ...

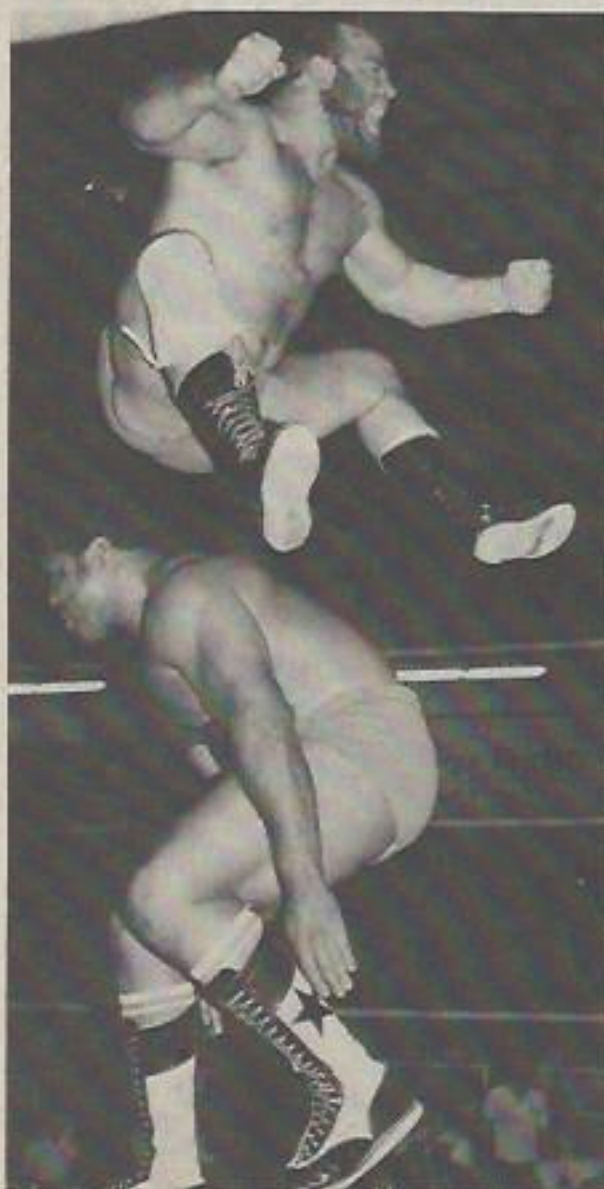
BUZZ SAWYER: Roddy Piper could be quoted saying plenty of things, but don't ever let him fool you into believing that he's any better wrestler than the "Mad Dog."

KING: Well, if I could just read this quote ...

SAWYER: Go ahead and read it, but I don't believe a word of it, and I don't care what it says.

KING: Piper was quoted as saying, "Sawyer had to do things to get ready to face me ... obviously Ellering is worried about Sawyer, otherwise he wouldn't have had him work so hard." How do you reply to that quote?

SAWYER: Ellering wasn't worried about me at all. Yes, he had me working hard, yes he had me drinking raw eggs to build up my energy, yes he had me



Sawyer leaps over a charging Pez Whatley, a man for whom the Mad Dog has no respect.

toughening my head with a length of chain, yes he had me do all these things. But Ellering wasn't worried about me. If he was worried about anyone he was worried about Piper and how much damage I would do to him once I got him in the ring. STU SAKS: If I remember, the two of you did quite a bit of damage to each other.

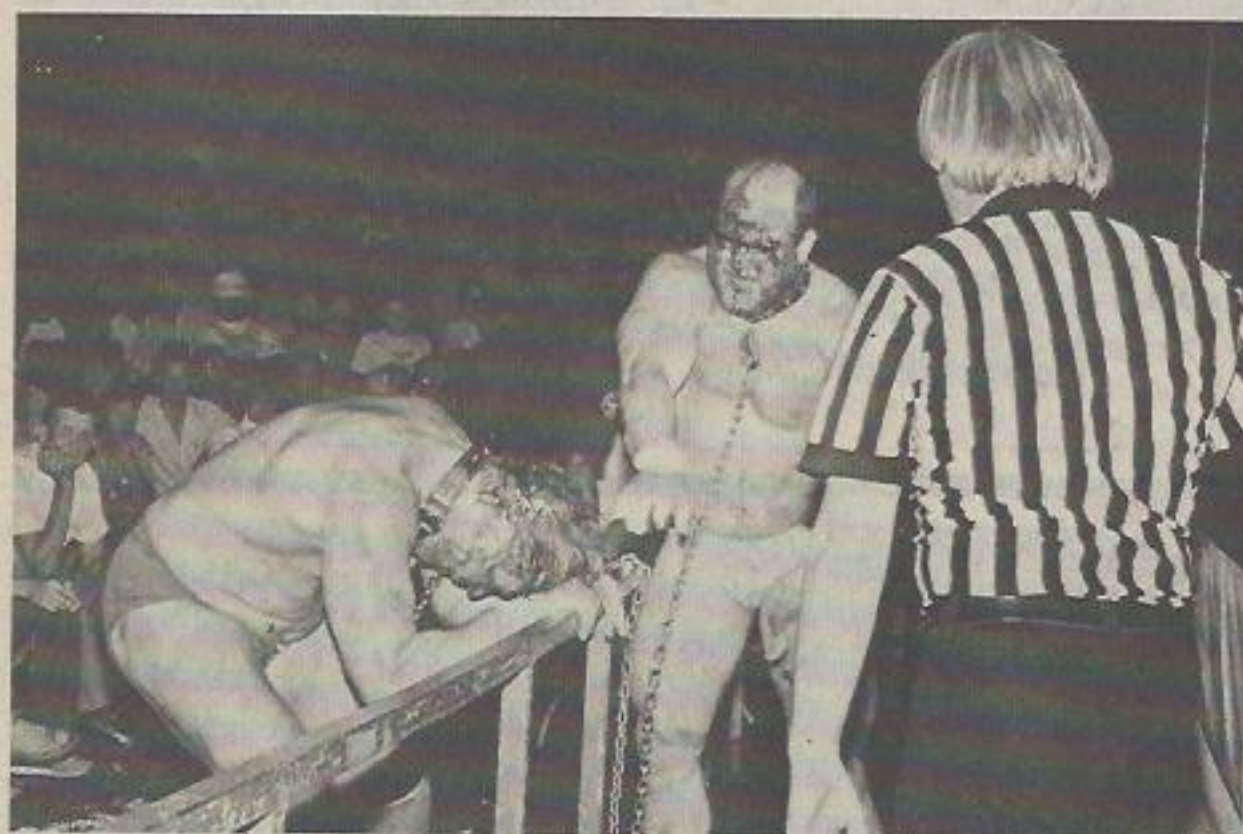
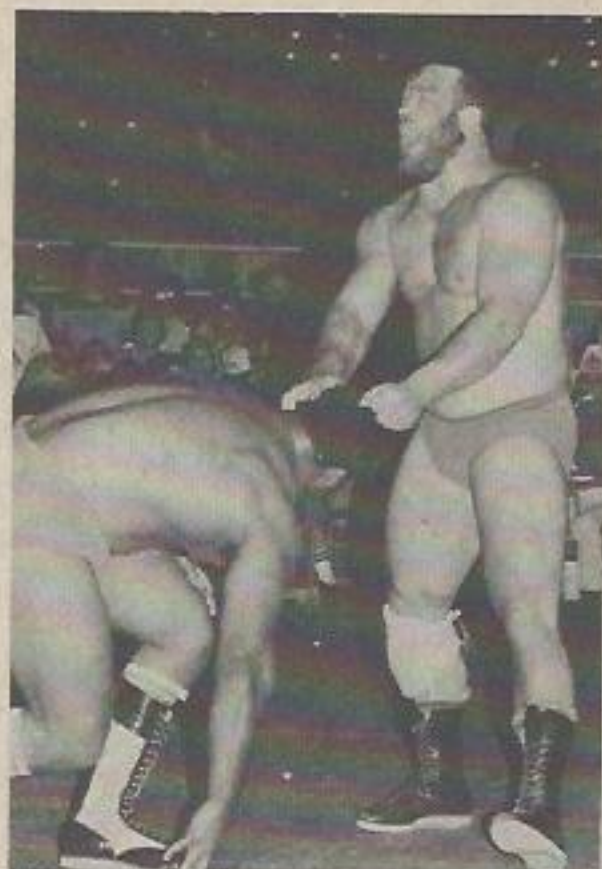
SAWYER: Yeahhh! Hahaha! Yes, we did, didn't we! Grrrrrrr,

CRAIG PETERS: You enjoyed getting bloodied up by Piper with a 10-foot loggers' chain?

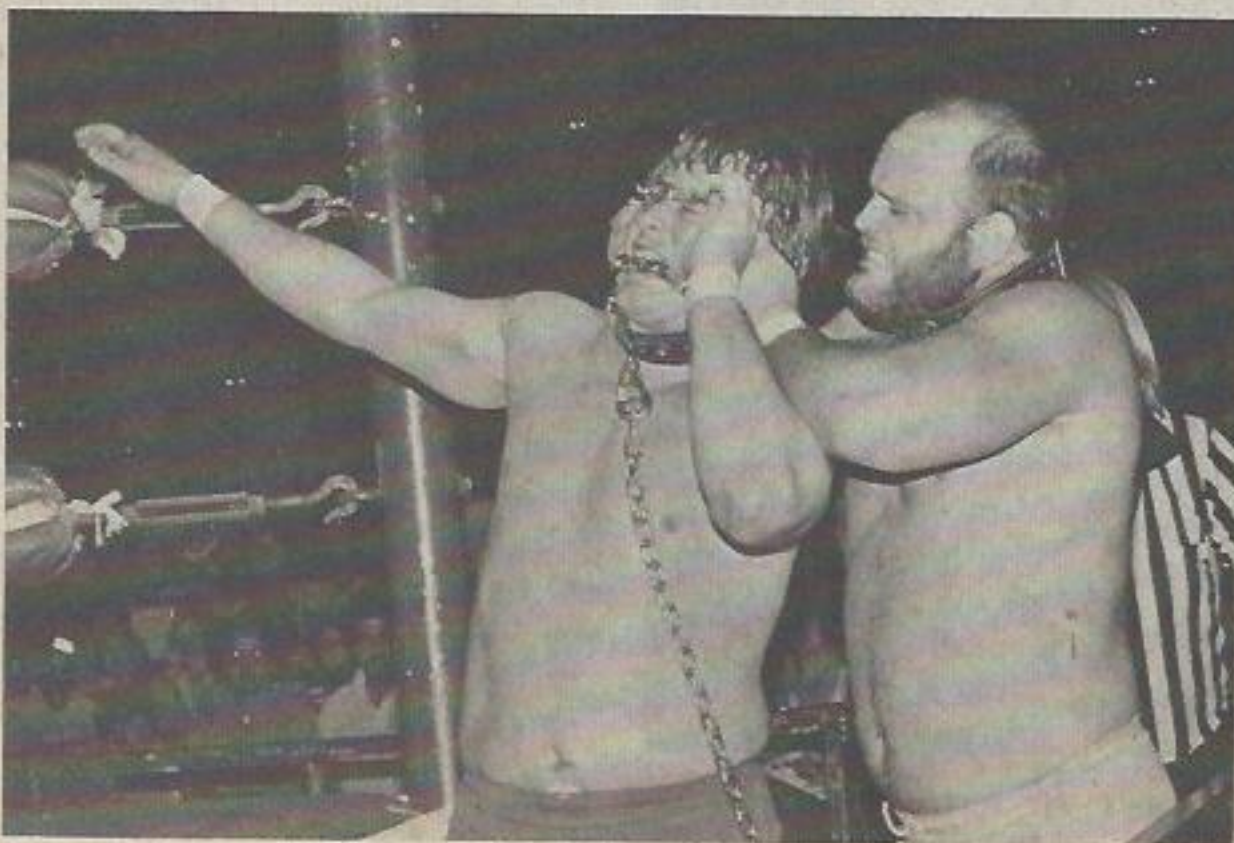
SAWYER: I enjoyed battering Piper's head with the chain, yeah, and I enjoyed the taste of my own blood and spitting it right into Piper's face, hahaha, he doesn't even deserve *that* much respect from me, hahaha!

KING: I'd like to ask you about Pez Whatley. How did you feel when he pinned you twice on *World Championship Wrestling*?





Sawyer's Loggers' Chain Match with Roddy Piper ranks among the most violent matches in Georgia history. Buzz slams Roddy's head into the fence surrounding the ring (above) and rips the chain across his face (below).



Sawyer takes the action out of the ring in matches against Whatley (top left) and Tommy Rich (above).

**SAWYER:** Grrrrrrrr.

**KING:** That was, in fact, the first time you had ever been pinned, actually the first and second times you had been pinned, on national television.

**SAWYER:** Pistol Pez Whatley! Scum! He thinks he's so great, but he had to have the help of Junkyard Dog to get himself going, now he's got Rich, and he's got Piper, and he's got a watchdog in Ole Anderson, and everyone is making such a big deal out of Pistol Pez Whatley.

**Phaugh! Ptoie!** I spit on the floor thinking about Whatley. All I want to do is get Whatley in a cage, that's right, get him in a cage and ram his fuzzy little head against the steel mesh. How about a Barbed Wire Cage Match? Maybe I could mess up his face real nice against the barbed wire! Hahaha!

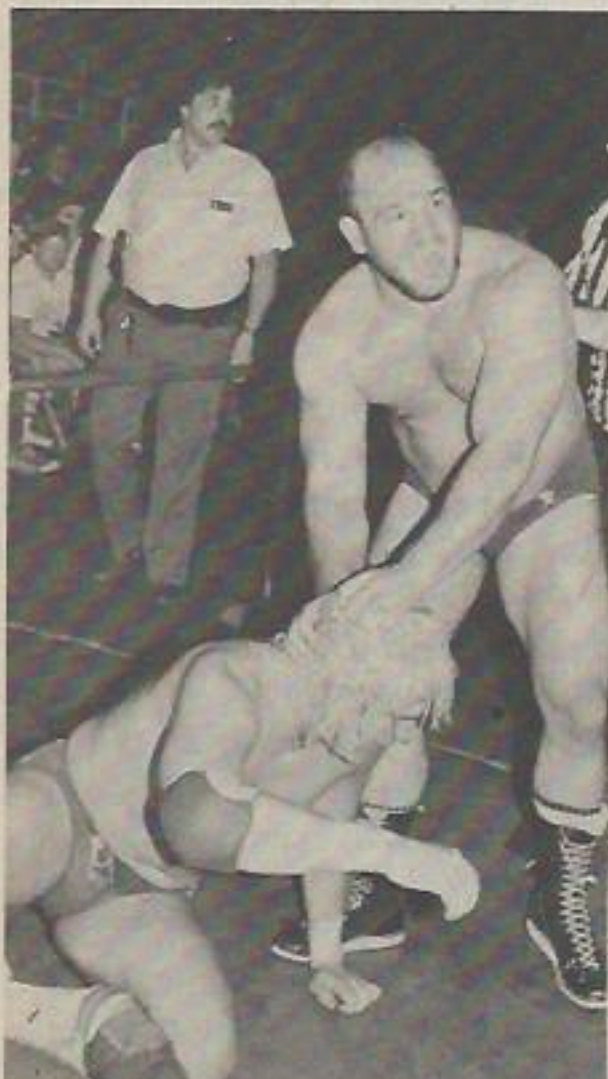
**SAKS:** What about your feud with Tommy Rich? That doesn't even seem to have ended yet.

**SAWYER:** Tommy Rich is another baby I'd like to turn into a man by showing him what a real match is all about. I've had Rich in a cage, I've had him in Texas Death Matches, I've had him in Lights Out Matches, I've



had him in every kind of a special match you could imagine, and still he keeps coming back for more. Well, if Rich is that stupid, I'll be happy, yeah, I'll be very happy, to keep giving him more. Just step right up, Tommy, and you'll get yours.

PETERS: Why does it disturb you so much that men like Rich and Piper and Whatley receive cheers from the fans?



Sawyer's feud with Rich began last year and hasn't subsided. Sawyer doesn't seem to be bothered by what the fans think of his actions.

**SAWYER: I could care less about the fans!**

PETERS: But any wrestler who is cheered by the fans automatically becomes your target.

SAKS: That's true. In fact, it seems that the only wrestler in the Georgia area who's cheered who *doesn't* wind up staring at you from the other side of the ring is Brett Wayne. Why is that?

**SAWYER: Grrrr.**

SAKS: Aren't you going to answer the question, Buzz?

**SAWYER: I've answered enough questions for one day. That's all I'm going to say to you idiots, get out. Get out!** □

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# WRESTLING

## 83

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#### HERE'S A LOOK INSIDE THE DEBUT ISSUE:

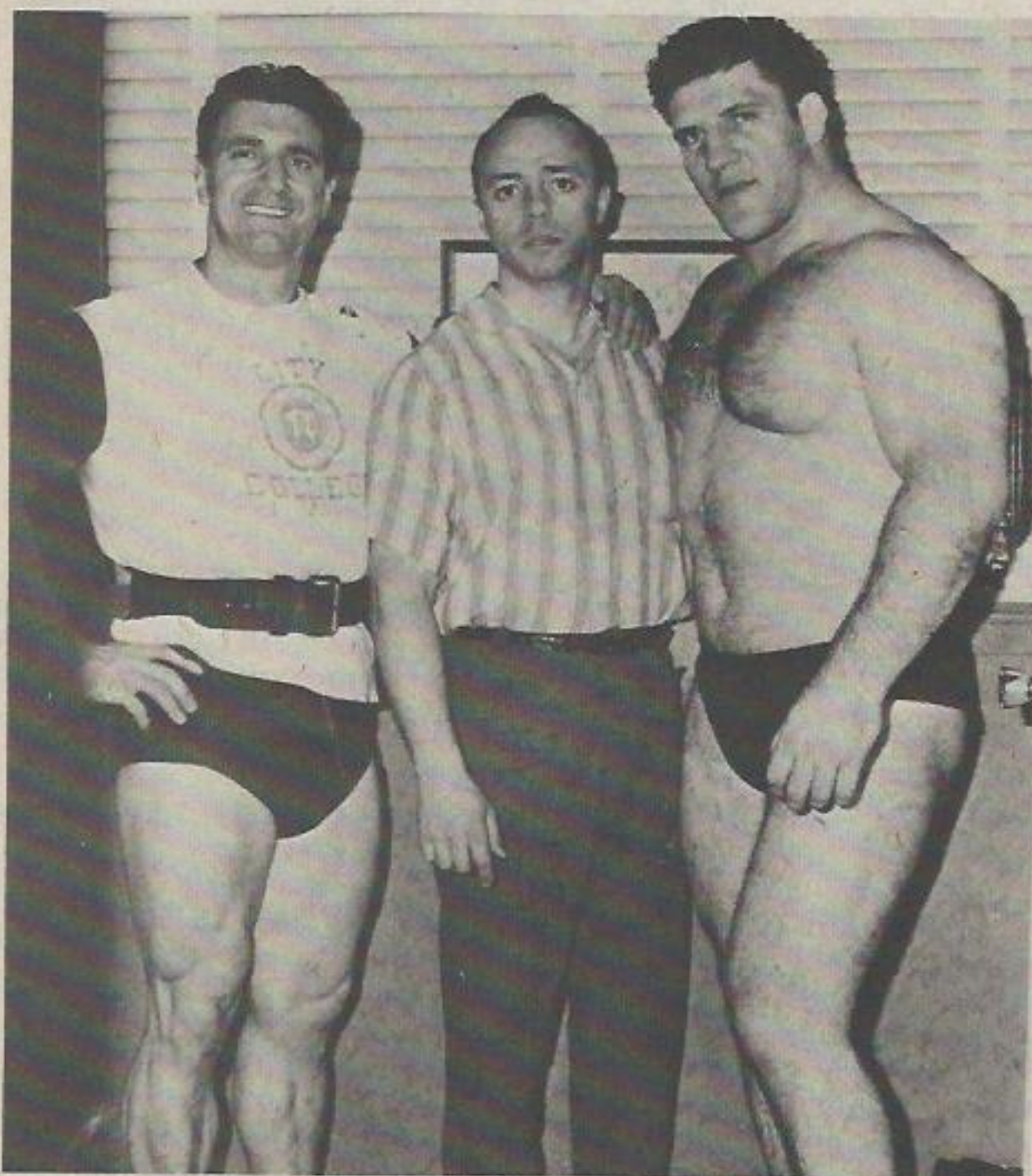
- Full-length color features on Hulk Hogan, Tommy Rich, Ric Flair, and Harley Race
- Coverage of the horribly sadistic brawl between Jimmy Valiant and The Great Kabuki
- A sizzling interview with the undefeated Andre the Giant
- The experts pick the winner of a dream match between Bob Backlund and Superfly Snuka
- Our cameras bring you to the home of the legendary Mr. Wrestling II
- A column written by controversial wrestling manager Precious Paul Ellering
- Plus columns and features never before seen in a wrestling magazine



# WFOCUS

With CRAIG PETERS

## STILL BUILT AFTER ALL THESE YEARS



1963: DR. KIMON VOYAGES, TOM MINICHIELLO, & BRUNO SAMMARTINO

You probably remember the cover of our September 1983 issue that featured a photo of the "Living Legend," Bruno Sam-

martino. Our offices received many letters asking when the photo was taken; apparently there were people who could not

believe that Bruno was still in such fabulous shape. The cover photo, by the way, was taken in May 1983.

PWI Senior Editor Bill Apter recently visited his chiropractor, Dr. Kimon Voyages, who gave Apter the photo you see here.

That's Voyages on the left, Bruno on the right, and Tom Minichiello in the center. Minichiello owns the Mid-City Health Club in Manhattan, where both Voyages and Bruno worked out during the 1960s and early '70s. This particular photo was taken in 1963, the year Bruno became WWF champion.

"I was amazed when I saw that cover photograph of Bruno," Voyages told Apter. "I expected him to still be in good shape, but not to the extent that he displayed on that cover. Bruno should be very proud of himself, having maintained such a physique over the years. He truly is an amazing athlete, and every bit deserving of his nickname, the Living Legend."

After cracking Apter's neck and back, Voyages had no such comments to make regarding the senior editor's physique.



## GIVEN UP ON FLAIR? NOT EXACTLY



FLAIR VS. RACE

The following letter from Andy Benton of Williamsville, New York, is indicative of a lot of mail I've been receiving lately:

*Craig, I have always respected you and your opinions. I always enjoy reading your columns in PWI and Inside Wrestling. But now I am disappointed in you.*

*It seems as if you have given up on Ric Flair. You can't expect the man to win the title the night*

*after he loses it. I feel I am speaking for all Flair fans when I say, just give him a chance to get back into the swing of things. I still respect you, but I hope you give Ric more time.*

Andy was referring to my November 1983 "In Focus" column. In that column I noted that I was surprised that Flair had not sought an immediate rematch with Harley Race after losing the NWA World title.

Flair did not ask for an immediate rematch, but in the last month or so he has wrestled Race several times throughout the country.

It's good to see that Flair has not given up on the NWA World title . . . or on himself.

## THE PWI T-SHIRT CONTEST



~~~~~

I continue to be amazed at the large number of perceptive fans who read this magazine. Hundreds of correct answers to the November 1983 T-shirt contest were received. I placed them all in a hat and picked the winner for the month: Kevin Molish of Columbus, Indiana.

"As an older wrestling fan, 34 years of age, most of these con-

tests have been pretty easy to figure out," Kevin wrote. "Your November issue photo is Paul Ellering. I remember seeing him in Louisville for a while when he wrestled for the CWA out of Memphis. He was a fan favorite back then, and he obviously had a tremendous career ahead of him. I'll never forget him alternately bodyslamming the original 300-pound Assassins at least a dozen times. He snatched them up as if they weighed nothing!"

Congratulations are extended to Kevin, who should have received his PWI T-shirt by the time he reads this column.

If you would like the chance to win a free PWI T-shirt, all you've got to do is identify the wrestler in the accompanying photo. Send your answer (don't forget to include your T-shirt size) to: In Focus/PWI, Box 48, Rockville Centre, New York 11571. The winner will be announced in the March 1984 PWI, on sale December 20.

## YOU CAN GO HOME AGAIN



CURT HENNIG

Curt Hennig is back in the area in which he first became a successful wrestler—the Pacific Northwest—and he reports that he's enjoying his championship reign there.

"As Pacific Northwest heavy-weight champion, I receive a lot of competition from wrestlers who want my title," Hennig said in a recent telephone interview. "Frankly, this area of the country gets ignored by a lot of people, and it shouldn't. The Pacific Northwest has spawned some great wrestlers as Jimmy Snuka, Roddy Piper, Rocky Johnson, and Buzz Sawyer. The talent we have here on a regular basis is second to none, as far as I'm concerned.

"But I have a weak spot in my heart for this area," Hennig continued. "This is where I first gained national popularity. The fans here gave me tremendous support as I was developing my wrestling style, and they continue to give me support now. I've spent years traveling all around the world, but The Pacific Northwest will always be a special sort of home to me." □



Special Fan Ballot

# VOTE FOR 1983'S AND GREATEST

**E**VERY YEAR AT this time, all eyes in the wrestling world look to the pages of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, because this is the place where wrestling fans answer many important questions:

Who was the most popular wrestler of the past year? Who was the most hated? Which manager has been the most successful throughout the year? Who deserves to be recognized as rookie of the year? Who will win the coveted top honor of wrestler of the year?

The answers to these and other questions will be determined by your votes in nine important categories. Read the descriptions of the categories on the following pages. Take some time to think about your choices, then fill in and mail the ballot on page 31.

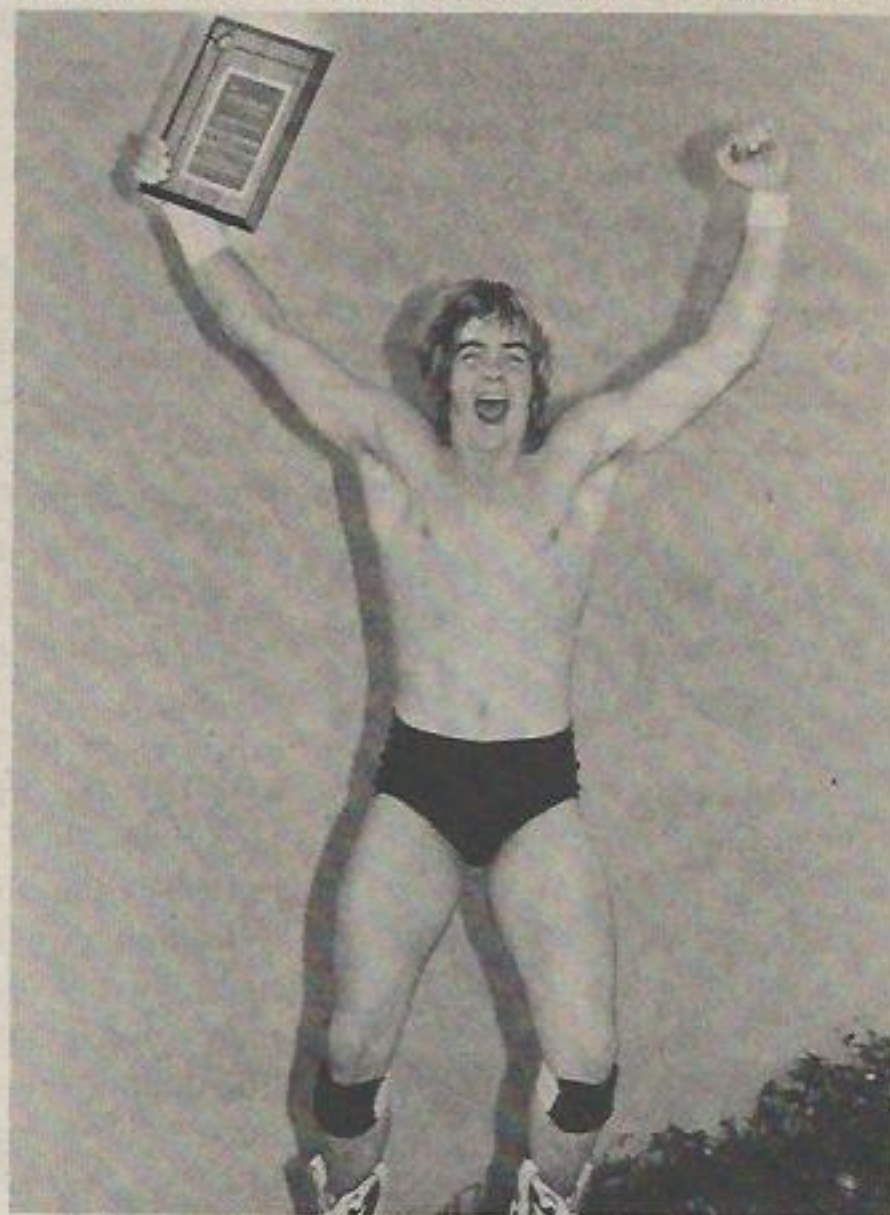
Results of the 1983 Fan Awards will be published in the March 1984 issue of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*, on sale December 20.

These are the most important awards in wrestling because they're determined by the sport's true experts—the fans. Remember, every vote counts, so fill out the ballot and mail it today!

## THE CATEGORIES

• **Rookie of the Year:** To qualify in this category, a wrestler must have begun his career during the past year. There are two important considerations to be made when making your selection. (1) What kind of success did the wrestler enjoy during the past year, and (2) What is the wrestler's potential for success in the future? Past Rookies of the Year have included Ric Flair, Bob Backlund, Tommy Rich, and Rick Steamboat. So your vote for Rookie of the Year may well be a vote for a champion of tomorrow.

• **Most Improved Wrestler of the Year:** In this category, it doesn't matter whether a man is a scientific wrestler or a rulebreaker. What does matter is how much he has done to better himself over the past 12 months. Perhaps he's learned several new and complicated



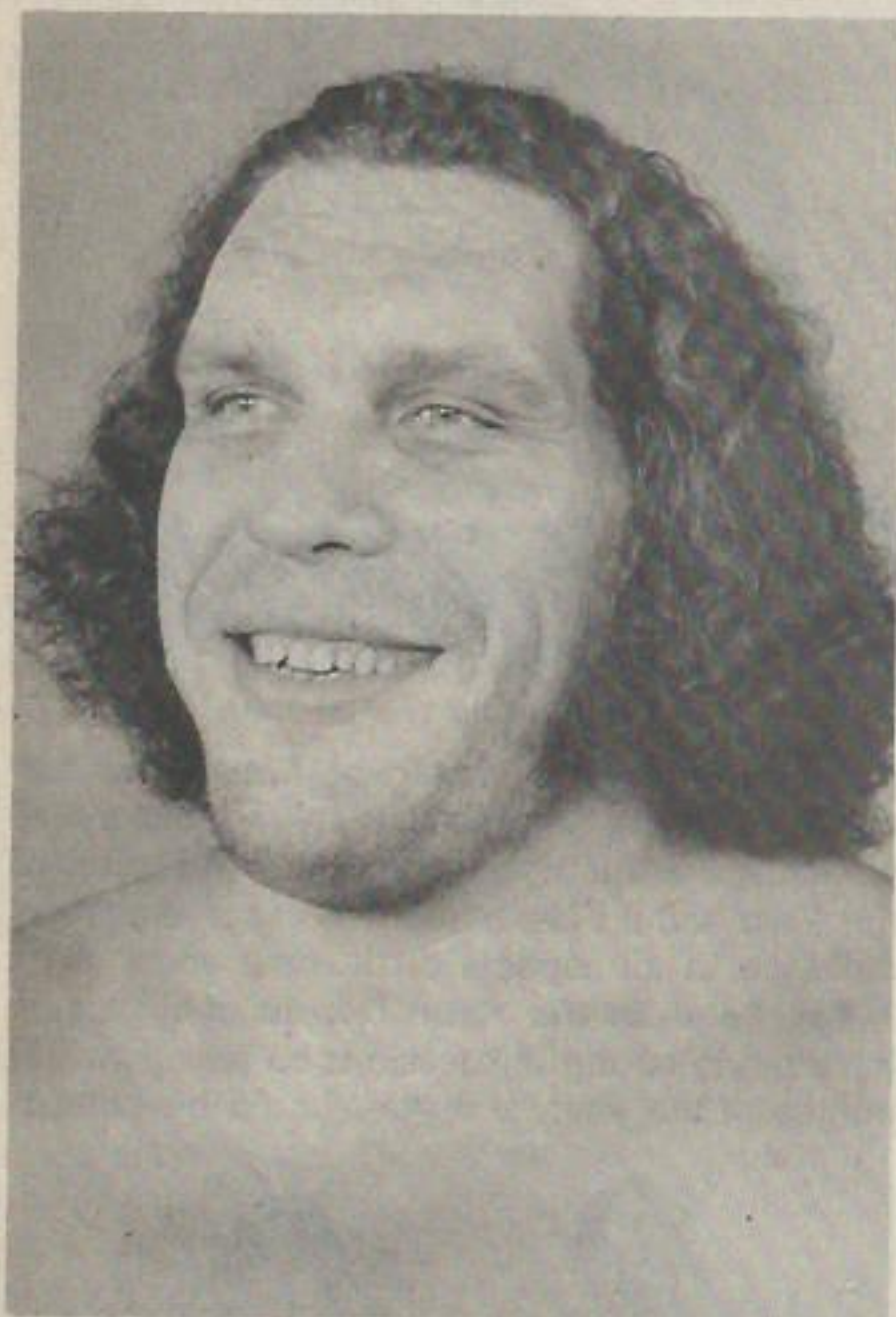
1982's Most Improved Wrestler: Barry Windham

wrestling maneuvers, perhaps he's won a major championship, or perhaps he's made a swift move from relative obscurity to the top of the ladder of contention. Whatever the reasons, this man's improvement must have been consistent throughout 1983.

Once again the editors of *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* open up the pages of this magazine to allow wrestling's experts—the fans—to choose the top wrestlers of the past year. It's wrestling's most important and prestigious fan poll. Don't be counted out: Cast your votes today!



# BEST WRESTLERS ACHIEVEMENTS



1982's Most Popular Wrestler: Andre the Giant

● **Most Popular Wrestler of the Year:** The *Pro Wrestling Illustrated* Achievement Awards are important because they are determined by the fans. The Most Popular Wrestler of the Year category is sometimes viewed as most important of all, because it is determined not by ring success, but by success in the hearts and minds of the fans. A wrestler who observes the rules and tenets of good sportsmanship and who respects fans and fellow wrestlers alike is a perfect candidate for this award.

● **Most Hated Wrestler of the Year:** Who do you despise most in the world of wrestling? If you had your way, who would you choose to have banned from the sport forever? Is there a particular individual who inflicted an injury upon your favorite wrestler? Who is the man



1982's Most Hated Wrestler: Ted DiBiase

## 1982 FAN AWARDS

### **Rookie of the Year:**

Brad Armstrong

### **Most Improved Wrestler of the Year:**

Barry Windham

### **Most Popular Wrestler of the Year:**

Andre the Giant

### **Most Hated Wrestler of the Year:**

Ted DiBiase

### **Inspirational Wrestler**

**of the Year:**

Roddy Piper

### **Wrestler of the Year:**

Bob Backlund

### **Tag Team of the Year:**

Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell

### **Manager of the Year:**

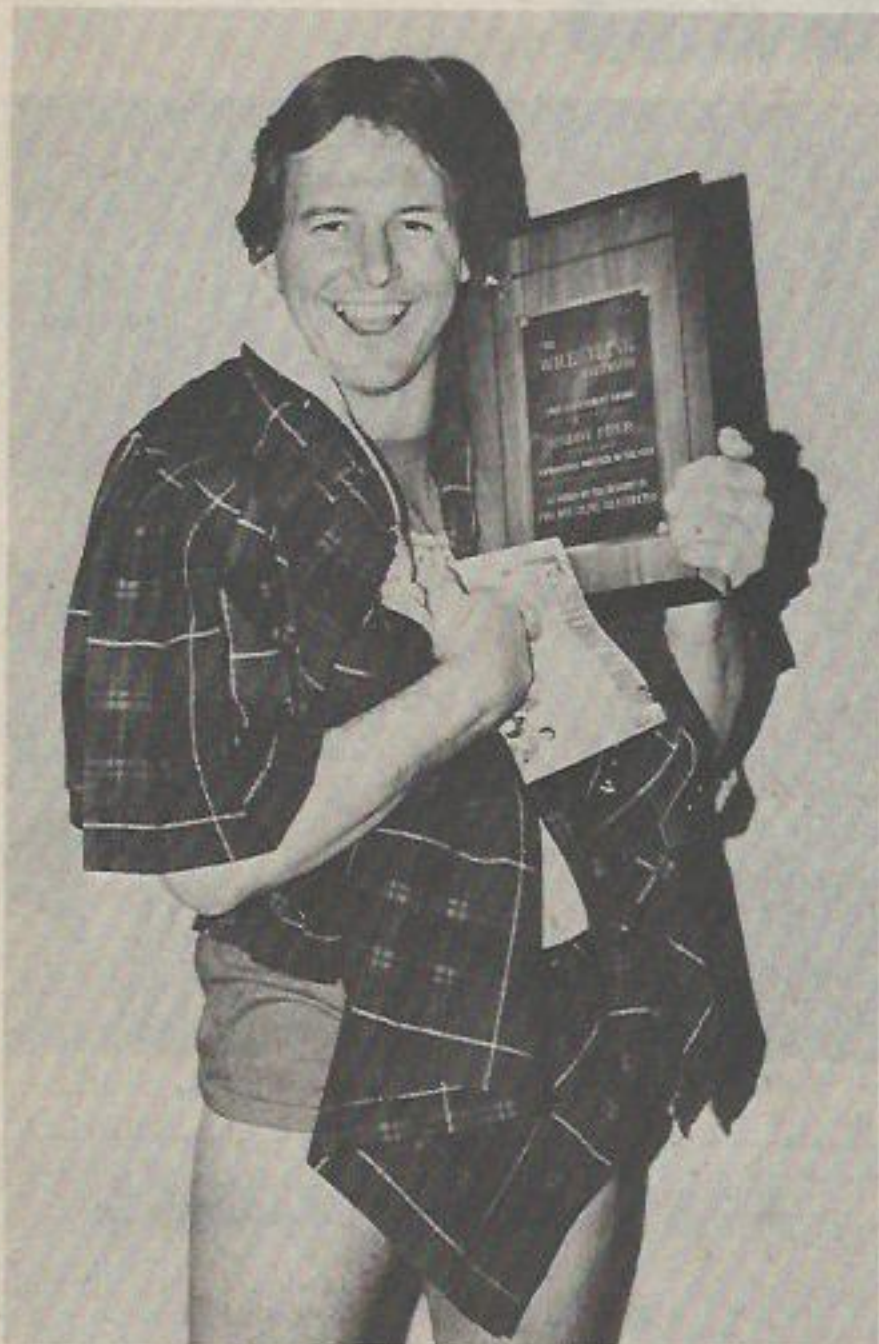
James J. Dillon

### **Match of the Year:**

Backlund-Snuka Cage Match



who causes strong feelings of hatred to grow within your soul? Does he spit at fans? Abuse the rulebook? Enjoy inflicting pain on his opponents? This is the kind of man who deserves to get your vote as Most Hated Wrestler of the Year.



1982's Inspirational Wrestler of the Year: Roddy Piper

● **Inspirational Wrestler of the Year:** Throughout the course of a wrestler's career, he comes up against obstacles both inside and outside the ring. He can either bend under the pressure exerted by these obstacles, or overcome the particular problem in a way that causes him to grow both as a professional athlete and a human being. The Inspirational Wrestler of the Year should stand out as a shining example of courage for fans and professionals alike.

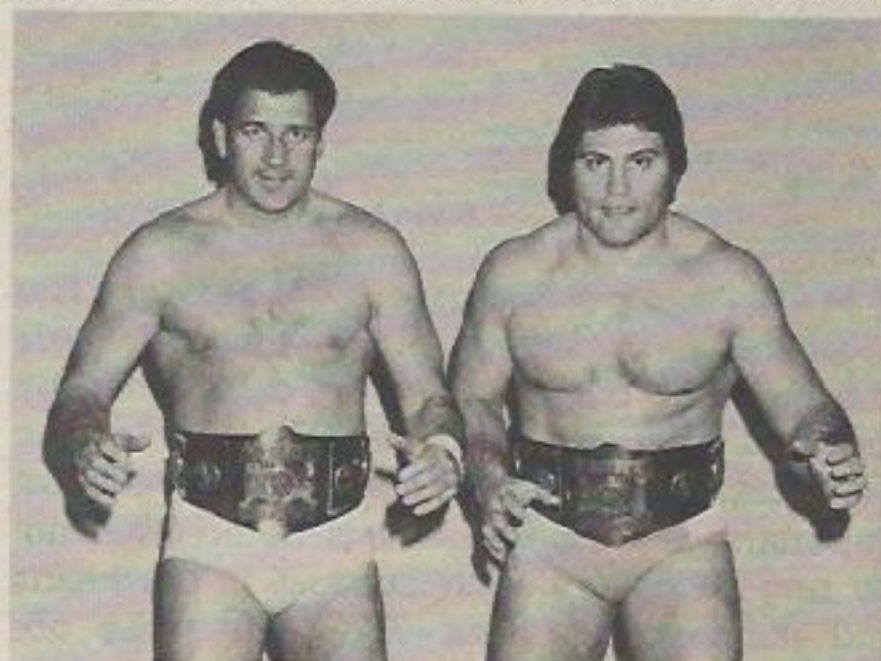
● **Wrestler of the Year:** In many respects, this is the top honor of all. Talent, skill, and pure achievement are the primary considerations here. The Wrestler of the Year should be a man who represents the true spirit of professional athletics. He should be a man who commands respect from all corners of the



1982's Wrestler of the Year: Bob Backlund

wrestling world. He should be a man who has made a lasting impression on the history of wrestling. Without question, the Wrestler of the Year should be a man who represents excellence in all aspects of the mat sport.

● **Tag Team of the Year:** Dozens of tag teams have made strong impressions on fans over the course of the year, and you should be consid-



1982's Tag Team of the Year: Gagne & Brunzell

ering their experience, skill, and success in the ring as requirements for a vote in this category. Many of the same qualities that go into making a Wrestler of the Year should be considered in your choice for Tag Team of the Year. (Teams that regularly compete in six-man matches are eligible for this award.)



# OFFICIAL FAN BALLOT

Send ballot to:  
**"YEAR END VOTE"**  
 c/o PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED  
 BOX 48  
 ROCKVILLE CENTRE, N.Y. 11571

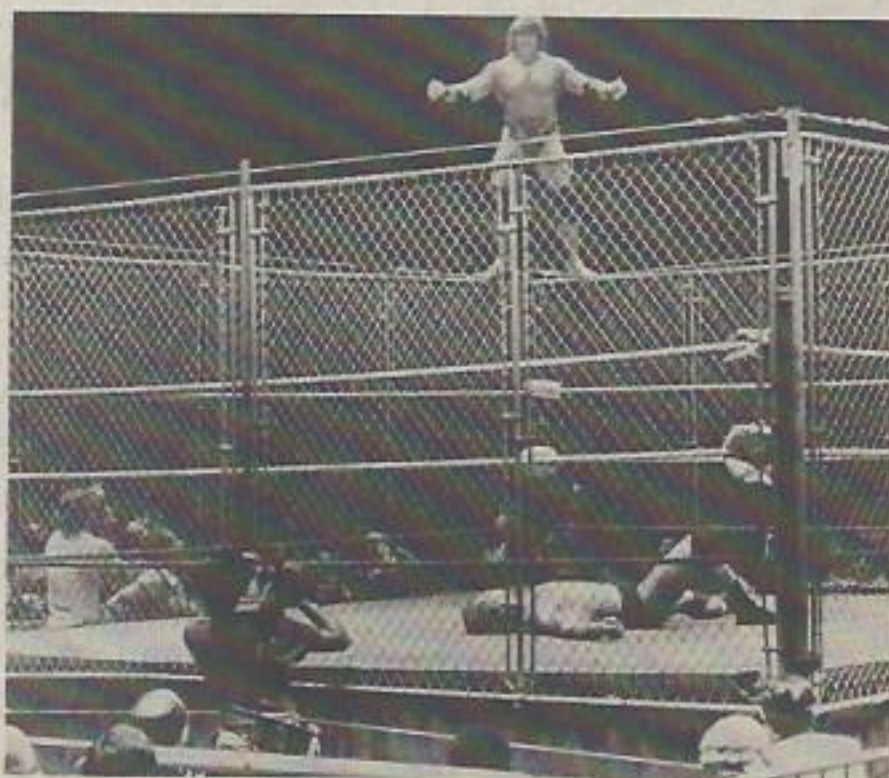
*Here are my votes for the best of 1983*

Rookie of the Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Most Improved Wrestler of the Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Most Popular Wrestler of the Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Most Hated Wrestler of the Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Inspirational Wrestler of the Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Wrestler of the Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Tag Team of the Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Manager of the Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 Match of the Year \_\_\_\_\_  
 YOUR NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

• **Manager of the Year:** A manager is more than simply an individual who stands at ring-side and cheers his wrestler. Ideally, he is a business manager, a strategist, a personal advisor, and a public relations man all rolled into one. When considering your vote for Manager of the Year, disregard whether that individual manages scientific wrestlers or rulebreakers. What you should be concentrating on here is the level of success that manager has attained over the last 12 months.



1982's Manager of the Year: J.J. Dillon



1982's Match of the Year: Snuka vs. Backlund

• **Match of the Year:** How often have you left an arena after a particularly memorable match thinking, "Wow! That was the match of the year!" Well, here's your opportunity to have that particular match immortalized as Match of the Year. Perhaps it was a match you didn't attend, but simply read about and thought, "I would have given anything to have been there." The Match of the Year should have been the most drama-packed, exciting event of 1983. There is only one restriction: The match had to have taken place in front of at least 5,000 fans. ☐

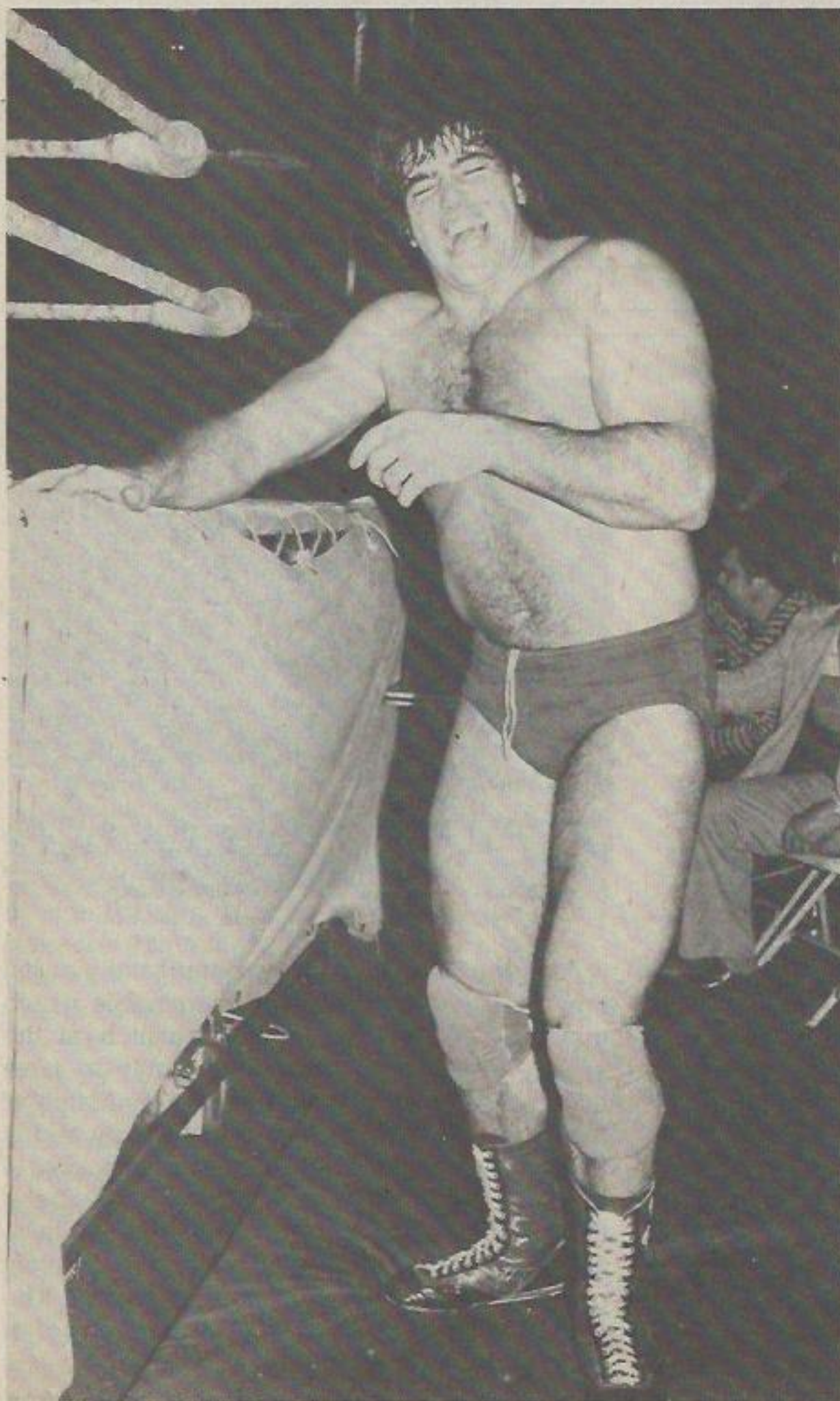


# IS AWA WRESTLING TOO TOUGH FOR RICK MARTEL?

By Liz Hunter

**S**ATISFACTION IS A dangerous thing for professional athletes. Athletes should never be satisfied with their performance, their physical condition, or the outcome of their competition. When they become satisfied, they fail to strive for more. Their forward progress comes to a dead halt. They lose their direction, and they lose sight of their goals.

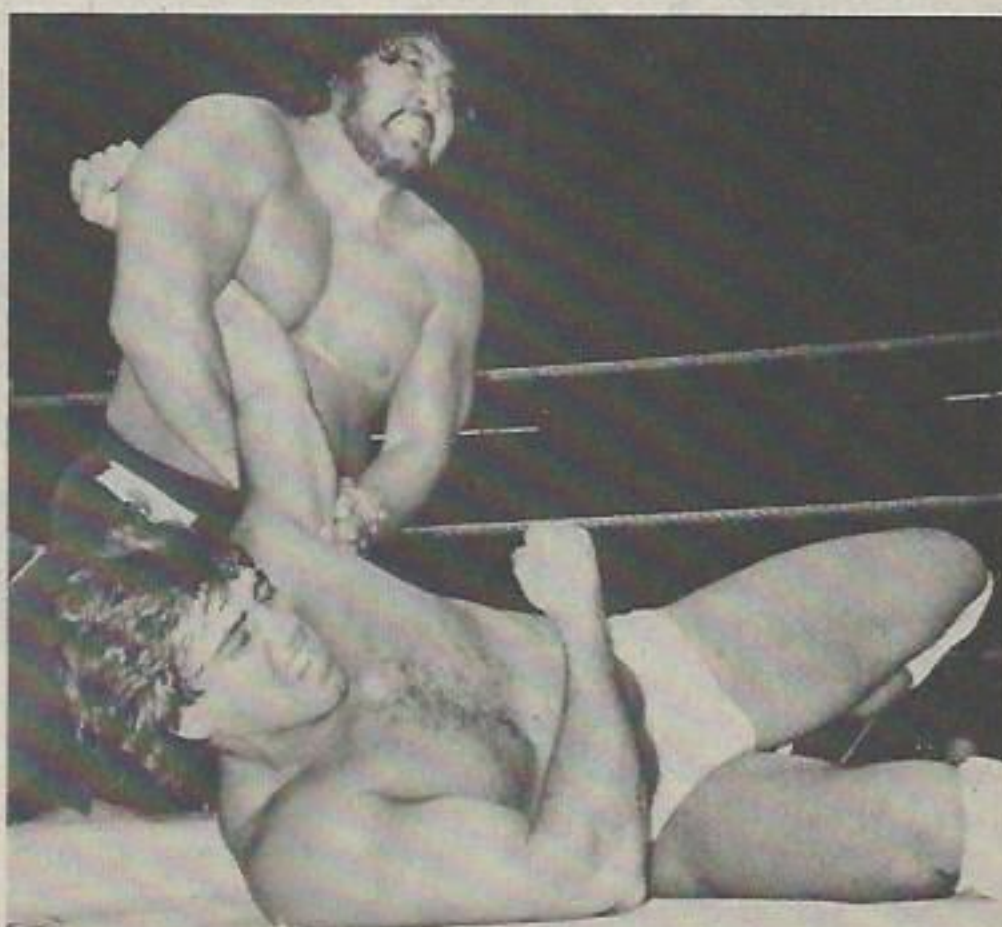
Rick Martel is not satisfied with his recent performances, and that's a good sign. Martel was the number one contender for the AWA



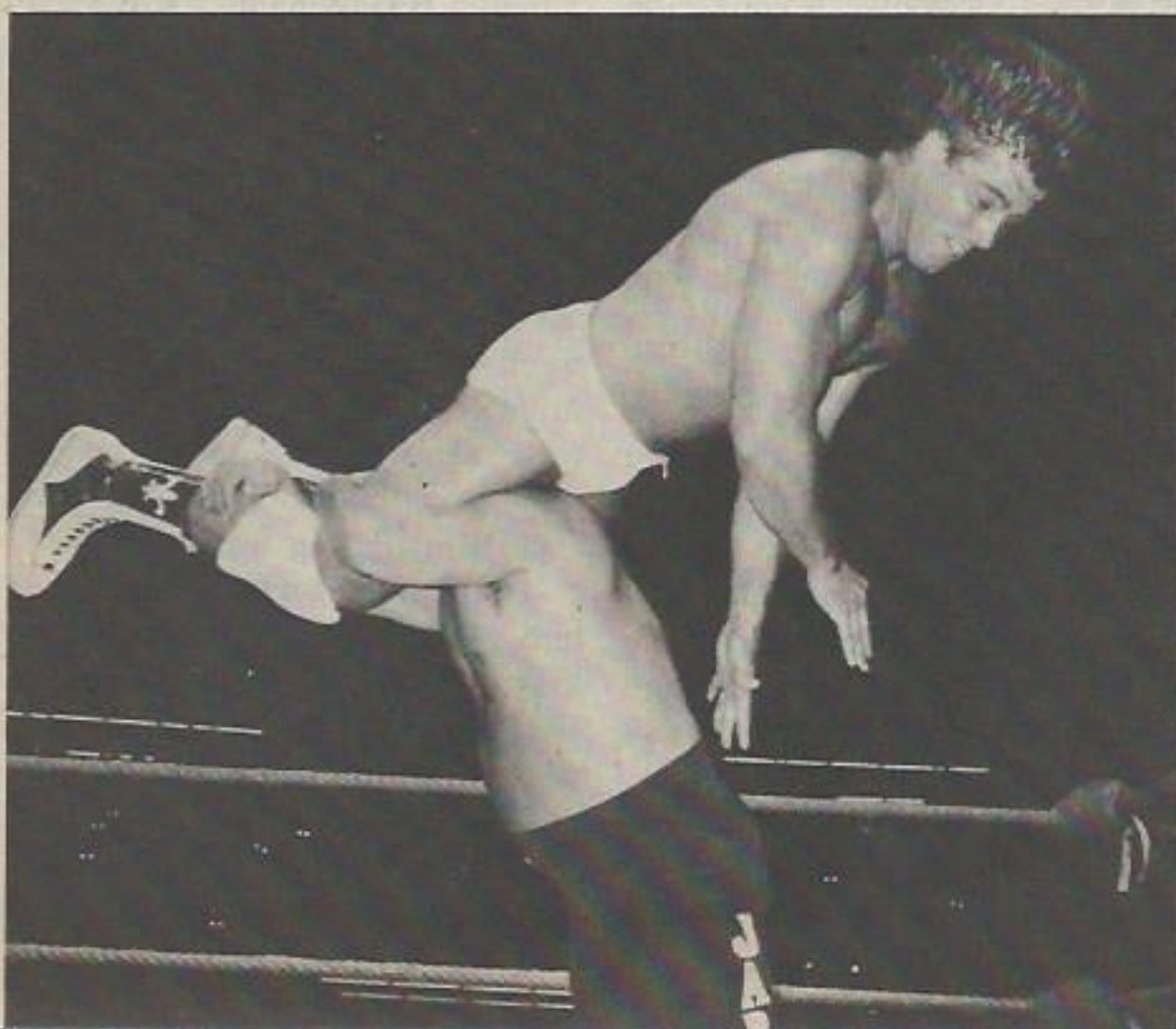
AWA World champion Nick Bockwinkel traps Martel in a sleeperhold. Having failed in his attempts to win Bockwinkel's title, Martel has moved down in the ratings.



**Rick Martel is at a dangerous point in his career. After reaching the top challenger's spot in the AWA ratings, Rick was unsuccessful in his effort to take the Nick Bockwinkel's World title. He has since been dropped to the number four position in the ratings. If the popular star cannot reverse this trend, his career could be in jeopardy!**



Ken Patera, his right eye already discolored, braces himself for a Martel right (left). Martel was disappointed in his performance against Mr. Saito (above). Rick will flip Saito to the mat with a flying headscissors (below).



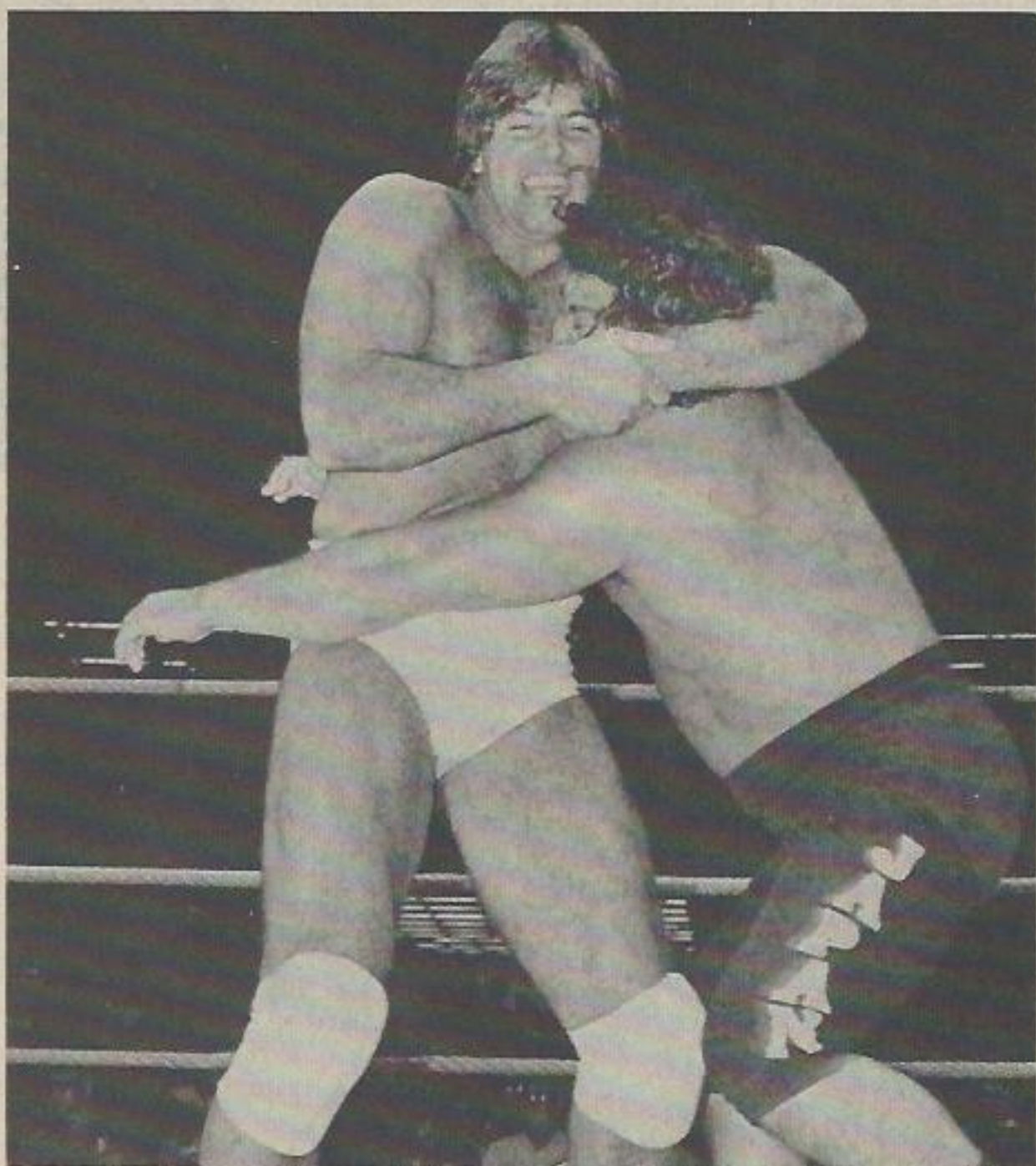
World title for much of 1983 but failed to defeat champion Nick Bockwinkel during a string of title opportunities.

Martel lost his number one rating, and a recent controversial loss to Mr. Saito set him back further. Currently he stands fourth in the ratings behind champion Bockwinkel, and contenders Hulk Hogan, Mad Dog Vachon, and Saito.

Yet, Rick Martel can still smile, and, in fact, he smiled a lot during the two days off he spent in Minneapolis. One might think that a professional athlete would want to get away from familiar surroundings on his day off, but Martel stayed home to supervise the repainting of his apartment.

Even with furniture scattered all





Saito tries to slip out from underneath Martel's headlock. As happens to all athletes, Rick is currently in a slight slump. The popular Canadian will increase his tag team activity to try to regain his confidence.

over the apartment and with painters walking in and out of the living room, Rick was able to focus his attention and speak quite candidly about where he stands in the AWA rankings and in his career.

"I'm so mad I could just..." At that point, Rick cocked his fist and began to throw a punch at me, laughing as he stopped inches from my face. "That would have been some story for your magazine, Liz. 'Down-And-Out Wrestler Kayos Female Reporter.' We could make *The New York Times* with that one.

"Honestly," he continued, "I can't be angry with anyone but myself, and that doesn't get much accomplished. I'm not a down-and-out wrestler. If anything, I'm stale. Maybe I've been in the same place for too long a time. Maybe I just need something new: a new hold, a

new challenge, something like that."

Martel discussed some extreme measures, including leaving the AWA. "I could just imagine what that sneak Bobby Heenan would be circulating through the dressing rooms if I left," he said angrily. "I could hear him saying it: 'It was too tough for Martel.' I'll tell you one thing. I don't think I have to prove anything to anyone. The AWA is not too tough for Rick Martel. In the time I have spent in this area, I think I've established myself as more than capable. Heenan will say what he will say. The only way you can shut that man up is by ripping his tongue out, and Lord knows I've wanted to perform that surgery for a while."

Martel has, in fact, had a successful stay in the AWA. After devoting a good portion of his career to tag

team wrestling, Rick made a smooth transition to singles competition and quickly worked his way up the rankings. He did manage to defeat Bockwinkel, but in a non-title match. He came very close to actually taking the title on several occasions, but was stopped by Heenan's interference.

Martel lost his number one ranking and has been unable to get it back. He has tried to explain his recent slump to the outside world—and to himself. "It sounds so simple," he said, "but sometimes the simplest things are the hardest to correct. In my last match, I made the mistake of letting Saito take control. I was playing his game, not mine.

"I let him isolate on one particular body part, my left arm. You see, Liz, when one part of your body is taking that kind of abuse, the pain just saps the strength right out of you. Saito doesn't just put you in an armbar, he wrenches that arm with everything he's got. Usually, my movement in the ring prevents my opponent from using a strategy like that. When I wrestle other guys, like Ken Patera and Crusher Blackwell, that isn't a problem. They can't match my speed, so they try to overpower me.

Martel is considering the possibility of going back to tag team wrestling, a move that would certainly boost his confidence. "Dino Bravo's coming down from Canada," Rick said. "It just might be the change I need. And maybe a few tag team matches would give me a new perspective on singles competition. Anyway, it will be great to wrestle with Dino again. Who knows, something might click and we could win the tag team title.

"I can't be negative about the future," Martel said. "I have a lot to look forward to. I still contend that I will be a world champion. That's what keeps me going. When I win that match and strap that belt around my waist, all the mental suffering will have been worth it." □



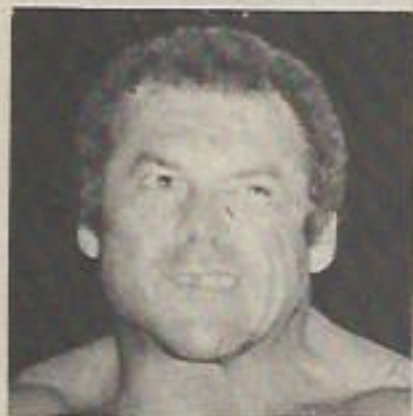
# *The Anger Of Snuka, Putski, and Santana:*

## **"BOB BACKLUND LIED TO US!"**

Photos by Duane Long & Bill Otten



**SNUKA**



**PUTSKI**



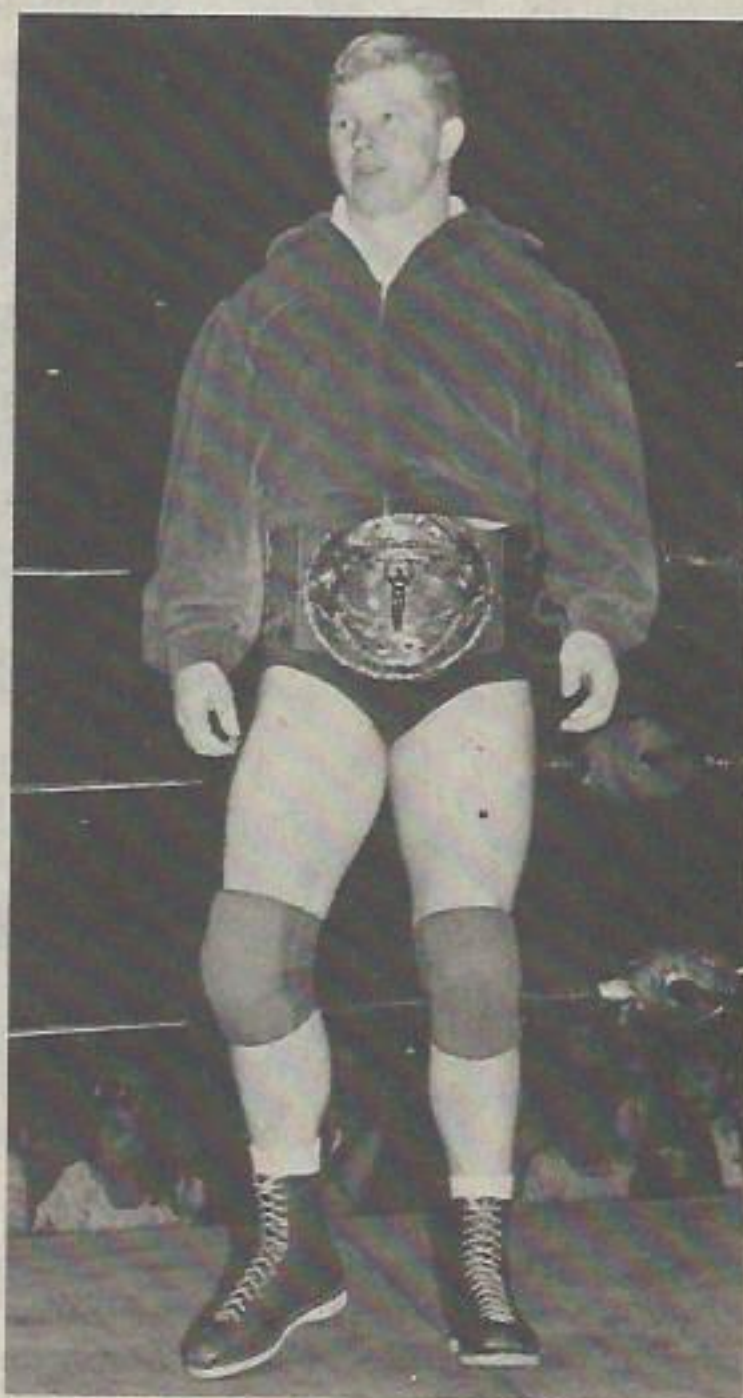
**SANTANA**

**T**O A MAN like Jimmy Snuka, a daily workout is of the greatest importance in maintaining his best possible physique. When Jimmy Snuka spends time in the gym, he's there to work hard. His body is his livelihood, and any deviation from his program of physical maintenance will make itself evident in the ring. It could cost him a match or, perhaps, bloody punishment from an opponent.

To a man like Ivan Putski, the gym is a second home. Putski has one of the best bodies in pro wrestling because he works so many hours a day to make it that way. Putski's success is a direct result of his physical strength, and nobody knows that better than Ivan himself.

When Snuka and Putski find themselves in the same town on the same day they usually go to the gym together. They're able to pass the time in discussion as they press their muscles to their limits.

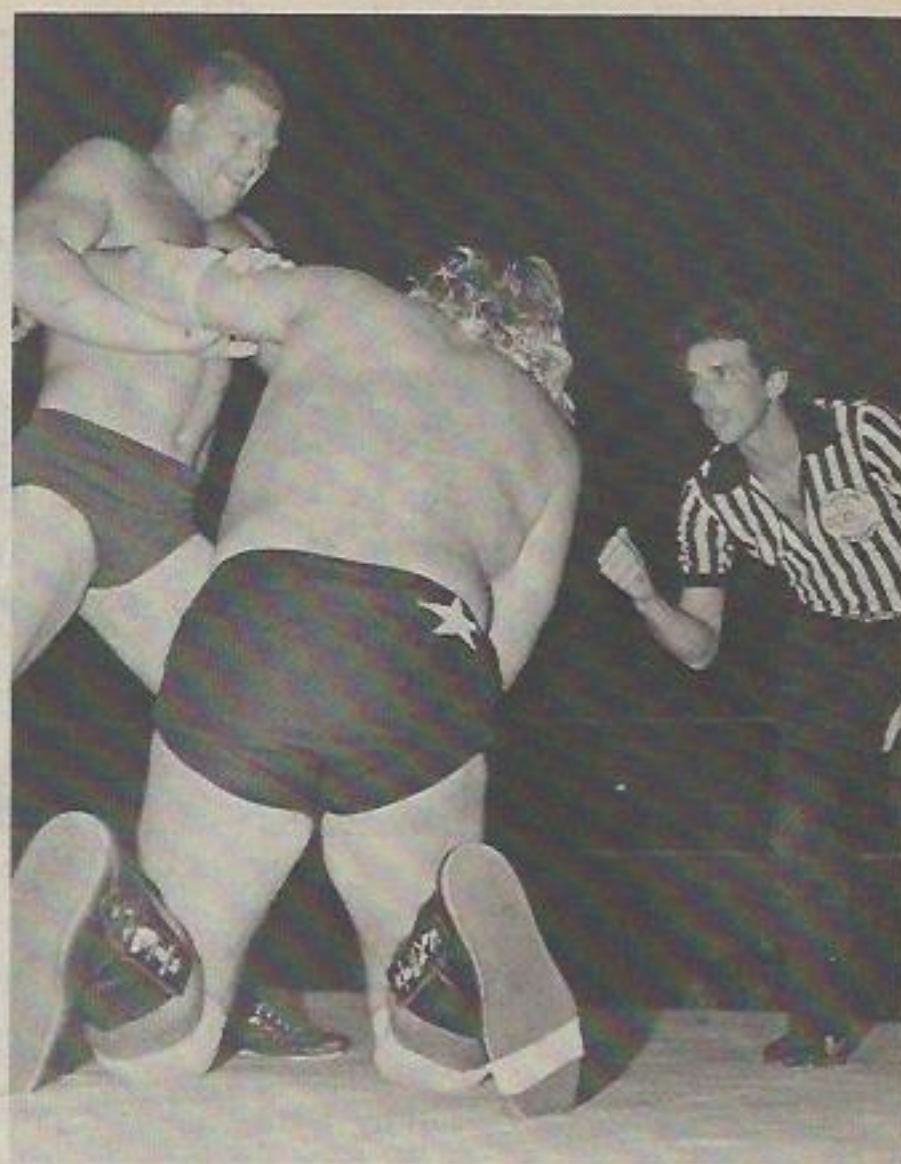
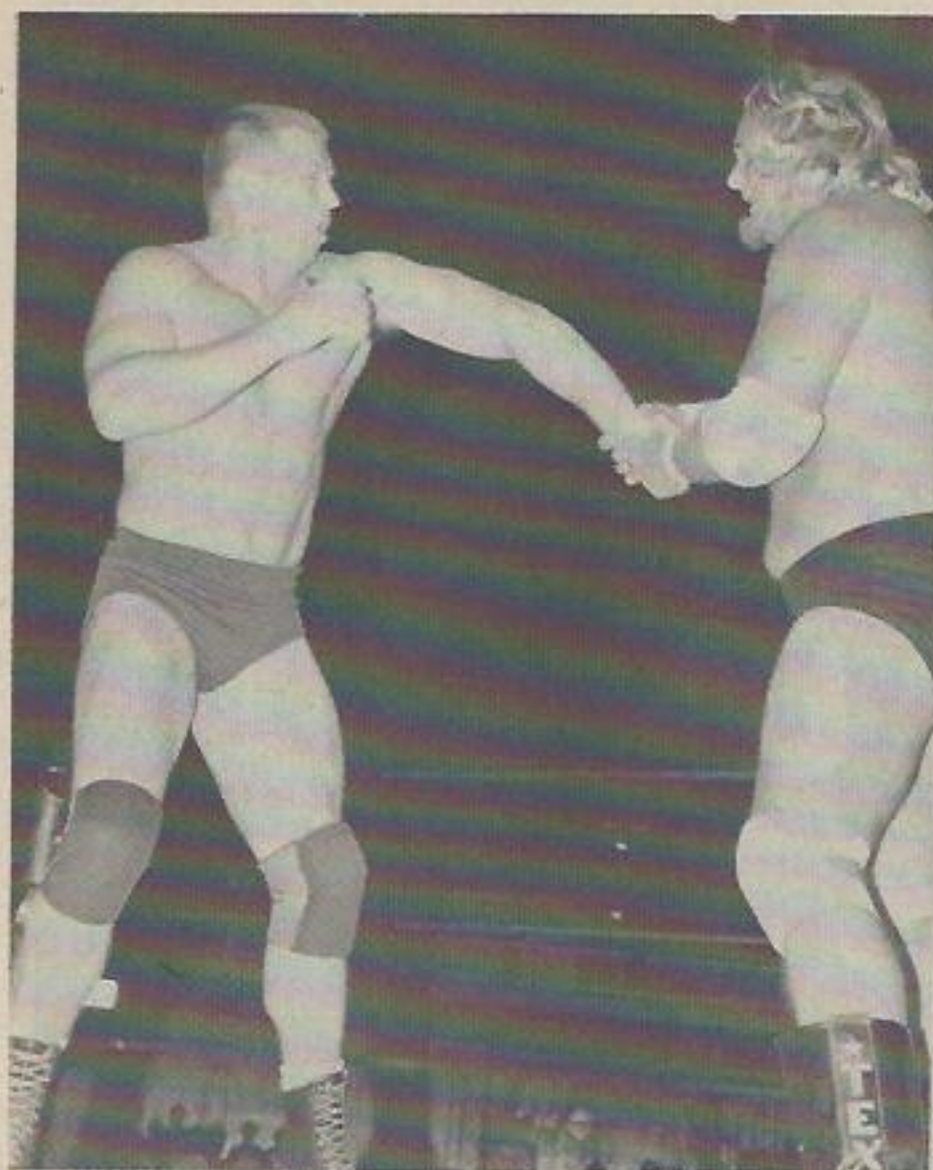
On one particular day in New York City, Snuka and Putski were



**BOB BACKLUND**

Jimmy Snuka, Ivan Putski, and Tito Santana: three of the premier scientific wrestlers in the WWF. They all want a title match with WWF champion Bob Backlund... and they all suffer the same heartrending disappointment as they continue to wait for a match that will probably never happen





Scientific wrestlers in the WWF were upset when Bob Backlund made a title defense in West Palm Beach, Florida, against rulebreaker Bobby Duncum instead of giving them their deserved opportunity. Duncum twists Backlund's left arm (above left), but soon finds that arm locked up (above). Backlund dropkicks Duncum (left).

scheduled to meet Tito Santana at the gym. All three men were going to work out from morning to late afternoon in preparation for their respective matches the following night at Madison Square Garden.

Usually the gym is crowded with people waiting for a spot on a particular Nautilus or Universal machine. On this day, however, the gym was nearly empty. Snuka, Putski, and Santana had

their choice of equipment. Santana chose the double-chest machine, Putski opted for an abdominal machine, and Snuka sat down in a device designed to build up the thigh and shin muscles.

After about 20 minutes, Santana stopped exercising. He walked away from the machine and sat on the floor with his head in his hands. He seemed to be staring far into space. Snuka and

Putski looked at each other. "The Superfly" broke the silence.

"What's the matter, brother?"

Santana looked up. A sense of helplessness reflected in his face.

"Nothing," Santana replied.

"Let's get back to exercising."

"Wait a minute," Putski said, "you just don't jump off a machine in the middle of a workout like that without any kind of a reason. Come on, Tito, what's the matter? If you can't tell us, you can't tell anybody."

Tito thought about it for a minute.

"All right, I'll tell you," Santana said. "After all, I guess you guys could understand what's bothering me as much as anyone else could."

Snuka and Putski looked at each other with confusion. They remained silent.



"Listen, Ivan, why did you leave the WWF a while back?" Tito asked.

"Well, I . . ."

"I'll tell you why," Santana said, "it's because you knew you couldn't get a title match with Backlund, isn't it? No, don't answer me. I know, because that's why I left, too. When we held the tag team belts back in '79, Ivan, that was the best we could expect in the WWF. At least while Backlund remained champion."

"Listen, brother, I had plenty of title shots against Backlund," Snuka said, "it's not impossible. You just gotta stay in there and keep plugging."

"Sure, but you were managed by Lou Albano then," Tito replied. "What about now? Has Buddy Rogers been able to get you a title shot now that you're a fan favorite?"

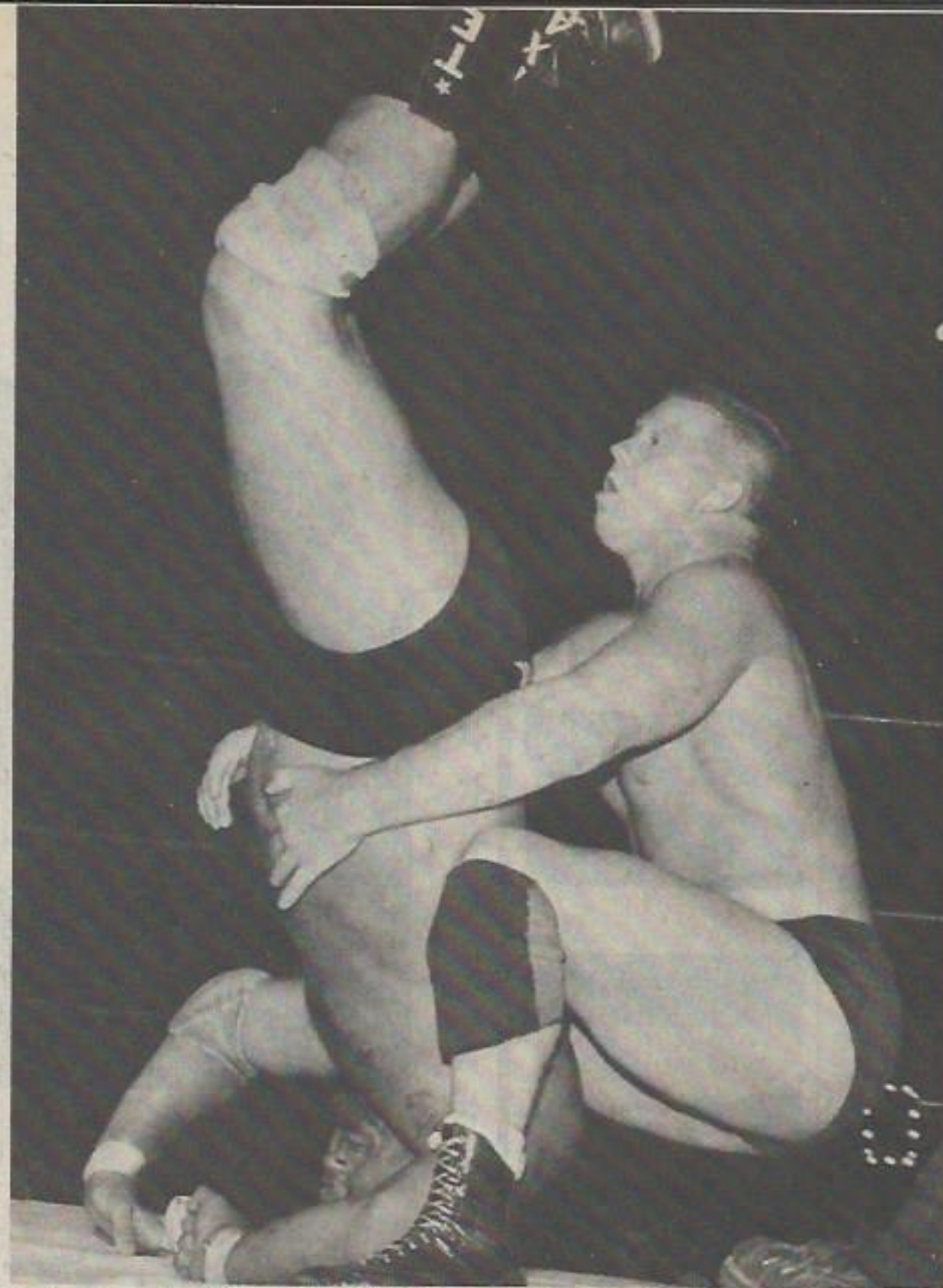
Snuka was silent.

"Exactly," Tito said. "I mean, what's the use? When I was in Georgia, I used to read all the stuff about Backlund promising the fans he was defending the title for them. I know you heard all about it while you were in Texas, Ivan, and you've had to listen to it for the last year and a half, Jimmy."

"I came back to the WWF for more than a shot at the Intercontinental title," Tito said, "I want a shot at Backlund's title. For the last three years I've been hearing how he defends his title against all comers, but he doesn't! He won't give me a title shot, he won't give you a shot, Ivan, and he sure as hell won't give you another shot now, Jimmy."

A couple of men came over from the other side of the gym to see what the noise was all about. Santana hadn't realized it, but he was almost screaming at Snuka and Putski.

"He said he would defend his title, but he won't," Tito continued, "and as far as I'm con-



Backlund uses the piledriver in his WWF defense against Duncum. Tito Santana is bitter about the fact that he has not received a title match. But should he be blaming Bob Backlund, or the WWF promoters?

cerned, that means that Backlund lied to us! He told us he would defend his belt against top contenders, but he won't! What the hell is he saying, that the three of us aren't top contenders?"

The gym was silent. Snuka and Putski looked at each other: They knew that Santana was right. But they also know that in order to be a successful professional wrestler, you can't give up hope.

"Come on brother, you've let off some steam, now it's time to get back to work." Snuka's voice was one of reason in a moment of emotional turmoil. Santana seemed to realize that Snuka was right, that in fact he shouldn't give

up. After all, if Backlund fails to provide him with a title shot, there are plenty of other areas of the country in which to wrestle.

Santana went back to work on the double-chest machine. The momentary anger seemed to have passed, but in his eyes there remained a tinge of anger. He may never be able to shake the feeling that he's on a treadmill in the WWF, that he'll never get a title shot with Backlund no matter how hard he works.

When you're aching for a particular title, and you're a man with the pride of a Tito Santana, settling for second best is simply not enough. □







blood said, "and pay the Briscos from wrestling permanently.

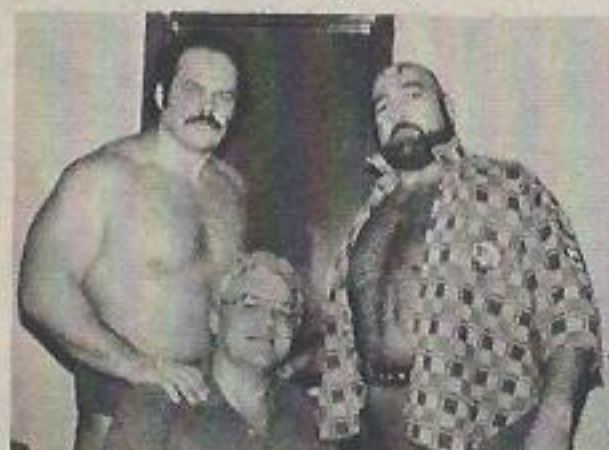
test of strength with Jerry Brisco.

## LeDuc Wants Dillon As A Manager

BY STU SAKS

TAMPA, FL—Florida Heavyweight champion Jos LeDuc has requested the services of J.J. Dillon as a manager, but Dillon has refused.

"Everyone knows how good a deal I'm turning down," Dillon said, "because signing a contract



Jos LeDuc (right) would like to be managed by J.J. Dillon (center), but Dillon already has an exclusive contract to manage Ron Bass (left).

with LeDuc would mean that I would control both the Southern Champion, Ron Bass, and the Florida champion, Jos LeDuc.

"But I have said in the past, and I reiterate this point, that Ron Bass is on an exclusive contract with me. I won't break that contract, even for the opportunity to rule the entire Southeast. This proves to the world that J.J. Dillon is a man of his word."

## Flair Seeks Another Championship Title

BY CRAIG PETERS

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO—Not content with his Missouri State heavyweight championship, Ric Flair has chosen to direct his energies toward the World Wrestling Council North American heavyweight title, currently held by Pedro Morales.

"When I was NWA World champion, I gave Morales several shots at my title," Flair said, "and I defended that belt with ease. Now that Pedro's got a belt of his own, it should be simple to take it away from him. I know his style, I know his mannerisms, and it won't be long before I have two



Ric Flair announces his intention to wrestle for Pedro Morales' WWC North American title championship belts."

Flair won the Missouri title in a one-night tournament in the wake of his NWA World title loss to then-Missouri champion Harley Race.

shown in the past few months alone is remarkable, and if he continues on the same course, he should be able to eliminate Zbyszko with ease just a few months from now."

Anderson has been vocal in his support of Whatley, but has made it clear that he is not Whatley's manager.

"I'm a friend, an advisor, a supporter, but not a manager," Anderson said. "I have too many obligations and affairs of my own to take on a managerial job. Besides, Pistol Pez has been doing fine without a manager until now, I think he'll continue to do fine in the future."

## Anderson Touts Pez As Next National Champion

BY PETER KING

ATLANTA—Ole Anderson claims that Pistol Pez Whatley will be the man to defeat Larry Zbyszko for the National heavyweight championship.

"Pistol Pez has really been coming along well," Anderson said. "The improvement he's

## AROUND THE GLOBE

### TOKYO, JAPAN

After suffering a shocking defeat, Giant Baba and Jumbo Tsuruta came back two weeks later to regain the International tag team title from the hated duo of Tiger Jeet Singh and Ueda. Some observers had predicted that Baba and Tsuruta would break up after the loss, but instead the duo went back to the gym and successfully reworked its strategy.

### GRAZ, AUSTRIA

Former AWA World champion Otto Wanz won a three-week championship cup tournament that included such international stars as Sgt. Slaughter and Larry Hennig of the U.S., Billy Sampson of Colombia, David "Tank" Morgan of England, and Rene LaSartesse of France.

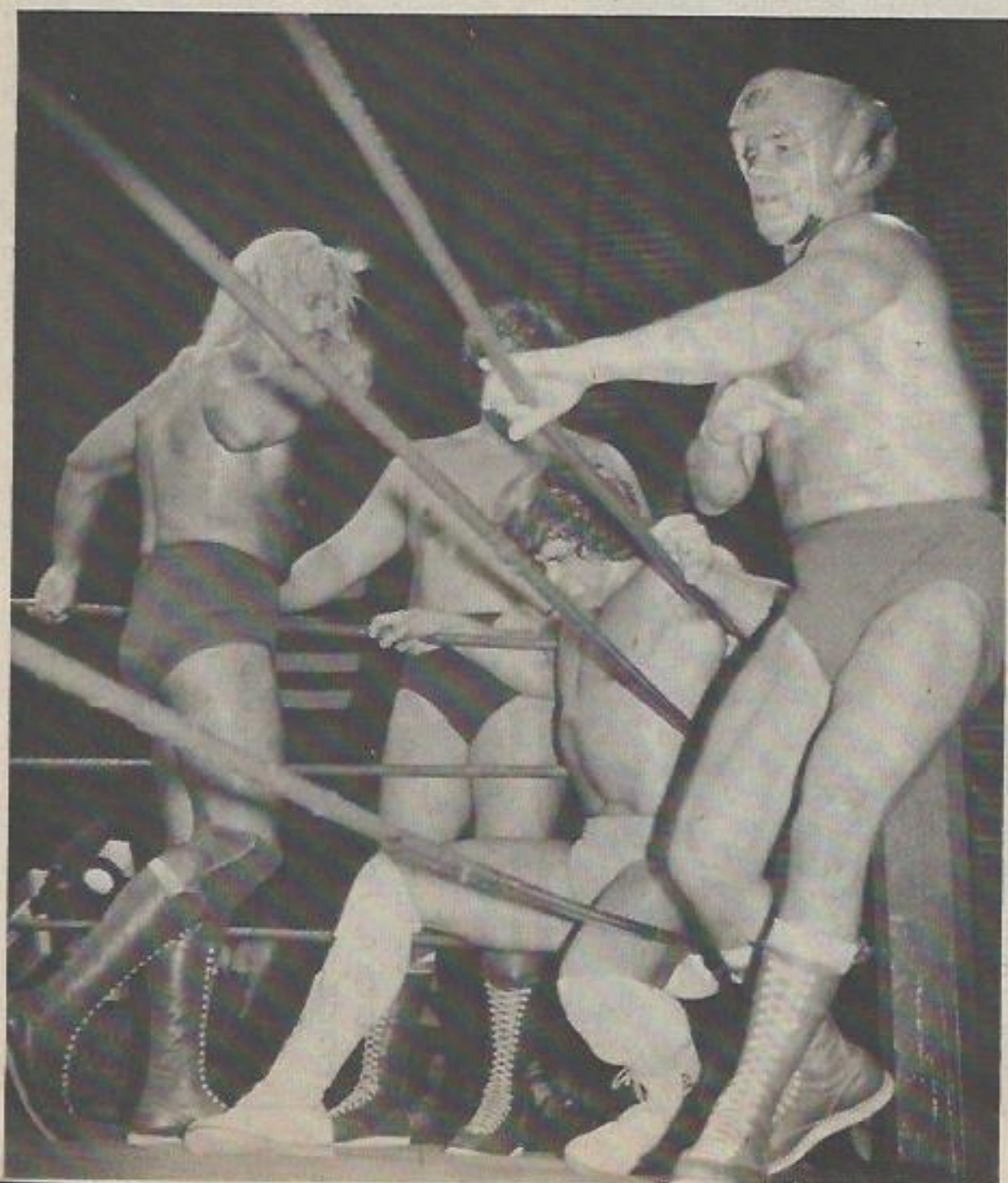
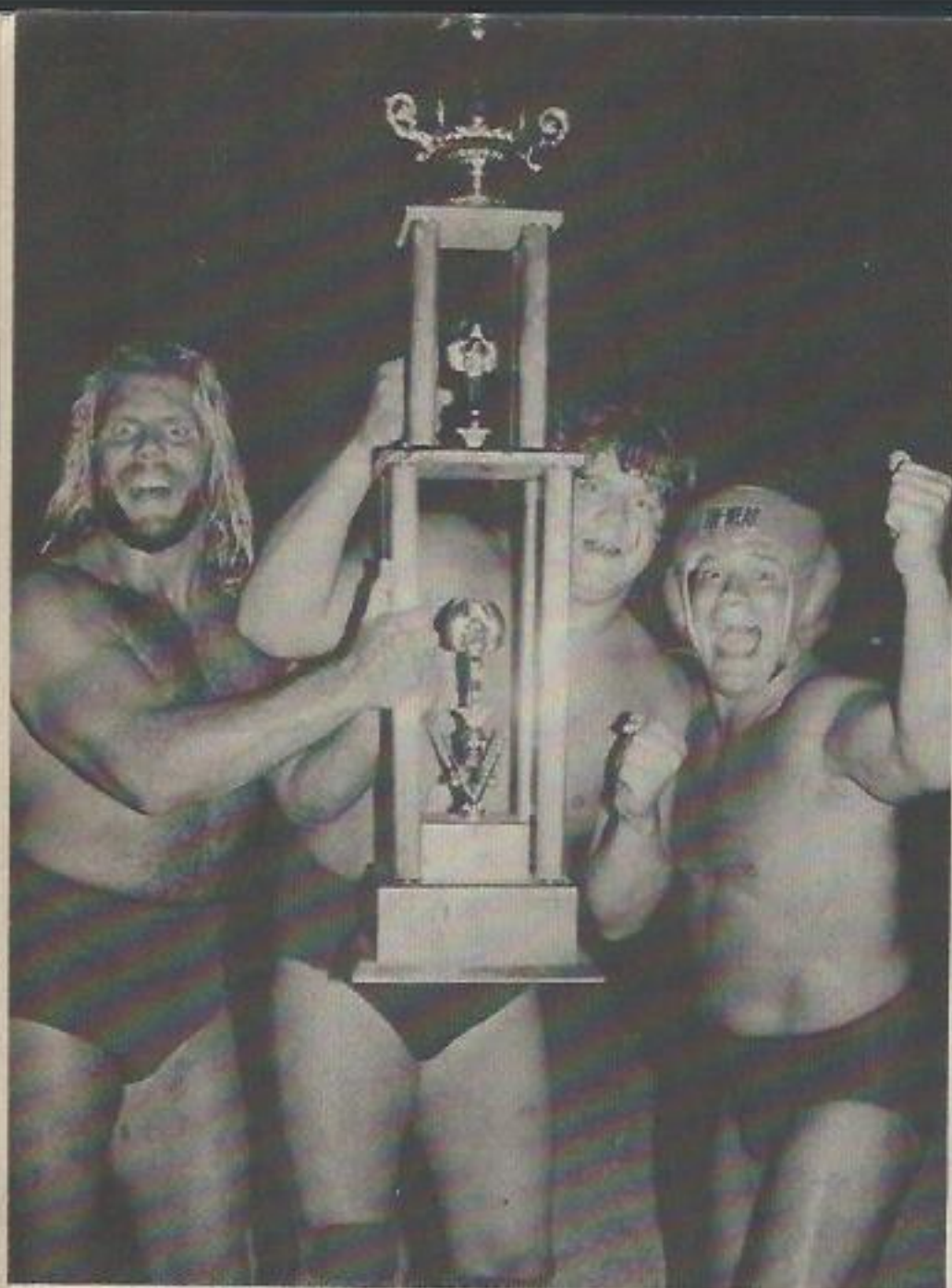
### LEXINGTON, KY

Jackie Fargo is coming out of retirement to join Steve Keirn and Stan Lane, "The Fabulous Ones," in a six-man tag team match against The Moondogs and Buddy Landell. "It will be just like the old days when I teamed with my brothers Donny and Roughhouse," Jackie said. "Six-man tag team matches were always my favorite. I can't wait to get back into action."



**EXCLUSIVE  
COVERAGE:**

## **THE FREEBIRDS REGAIN THE SIX-MAN TAG TEAM TITLE FROM THE VON ERICHS**



**T**HERE DIDN'T SEEM to be any point in talking about it. Though the Von Erichs courteously attended the postmatch interview after losing the World Class six-man tag team title to The Freebirds, no one really wanted to question them. The men deserved to contemplate their loss in private and their expressions clearly said as much. It was an uncomfortable encounter for everyone concerned.

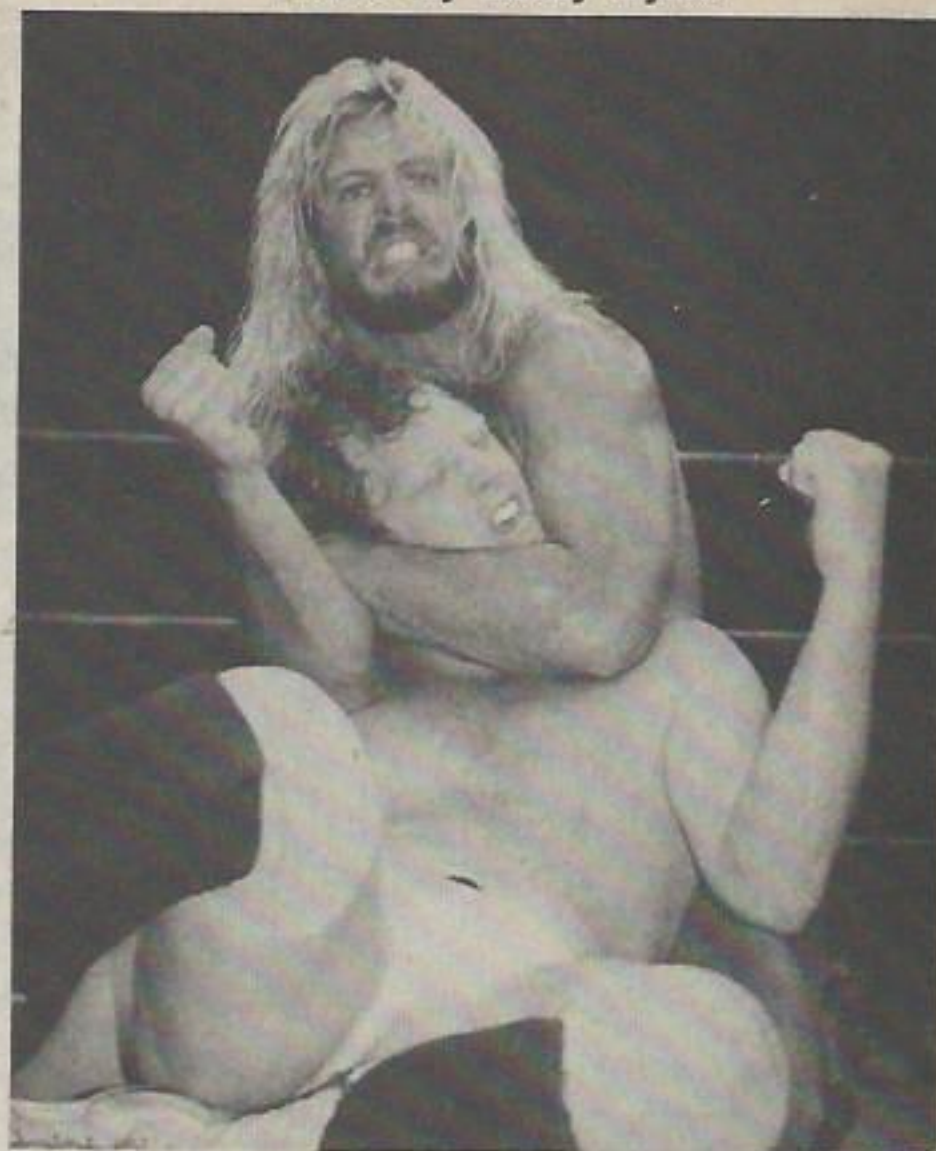
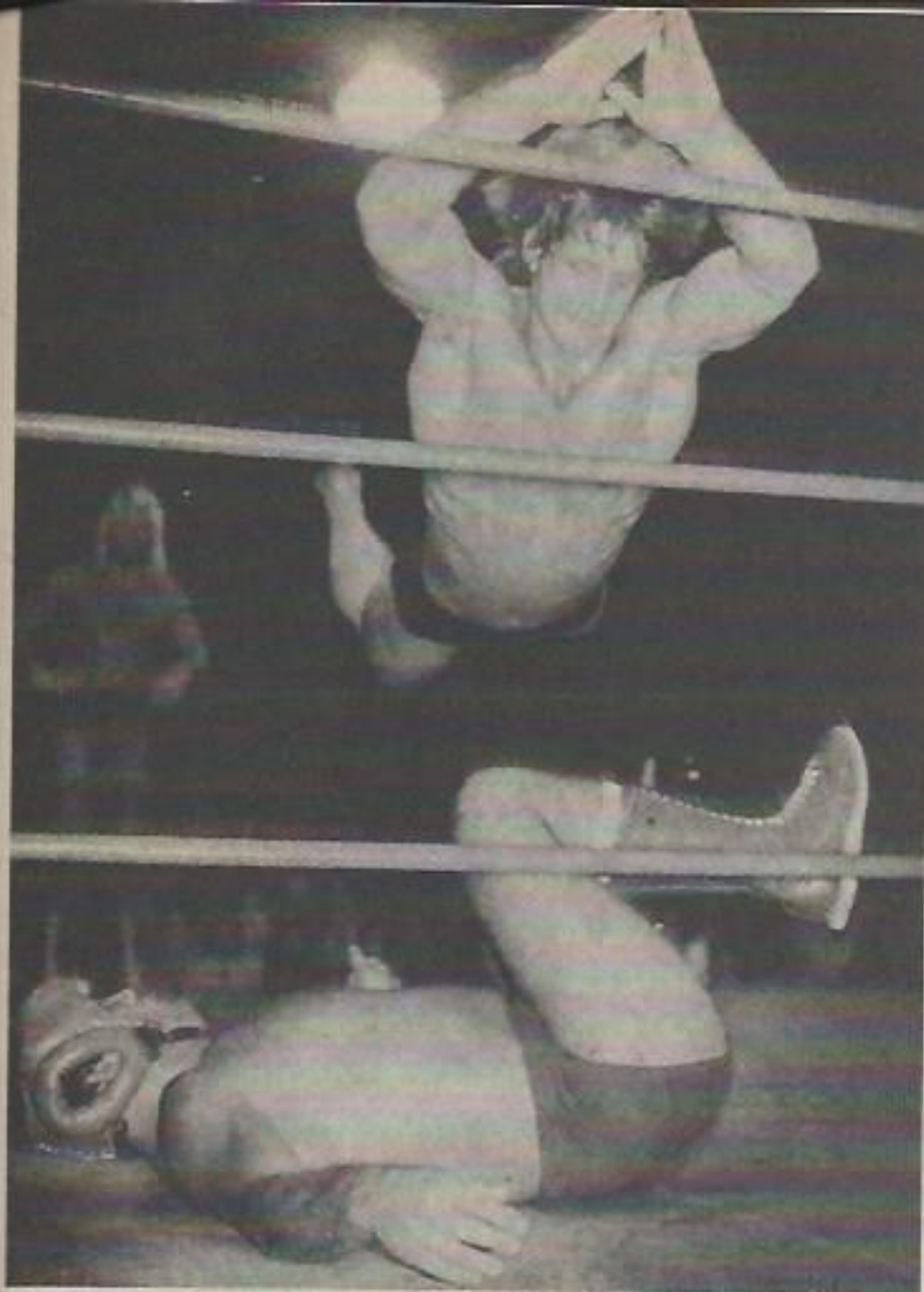
A reporter figured as soon as the obvious questions were asked, the sooner this ordeal would end. So he started by asking if Freebird Buddy Roberts had indeed loaded his headgear.

"I don't like to make excuses," Kerry Von Erich, Roberts' victim, began, "but you know what happened. He gave me a headbutt and I went down hard. There was

---

Kerry Von Erich slumps in the enemy corner after being butted in the head by Buddy Roberts. Roberts, who has moved to the ring apron, denies the Von Erich claim that he had an object under his headgear.





Roberts throws up his knees to defend himself against a flying Kevin Von Erich (left). Michael Hayes stares threateningly at the Von Erich corner as he holds David in a headlock (above).

**In one of the most shocking and controversial upsets in wrestling history, The Freebirds have regained the World Class six-man tag team title from the Von Erichs. How it happened might enrage you. What it means to the Von Erichs' future might horrify you!**

never a chance I could have recovered or escaped. I've taken headbutts before, my skull's been banged by the best, and it never felt that painful. What knocked me out had nothing to do with the human skull. I'm not making excuses but answering your question. It's impossible that Roberts didn't have a loaded headgear."

"I'm not making excuses either," brother David interrupted, "but Kerry doesn't go down like a rock from just a headbutt. It had to be illegally done. We can't prove it, so there's no point in shouting now. But I promise you—and The Freebirds—one thing. We're getting those belts back. More than that,

we're getting revenge. The Freebirds will wish they never heard of the Von Erichs. The Freebirds will wish they never heard of wrestling! That's more than a promise. That's a fact!"

A reporter asked Kevin if he would like to add anything.

Kevin shook his head. Several reporters noted his knuckles were white as he clenched his fists.

The Von Erichs left the room. Everyone was relieved. This had been the most uncomfortable interview anyone present had suffered in a long time. The Von Erichs had always treated the press fairly, and though the reporters were supposed to remain neutral, in the Von

Erich's case it was impossible. The brothers were good for the sport and good to it. You couldn't help liking the men. After the loss of their six-man tag team title, everyone felt saddened. As to the manner of the loss, everyone felt enraged.

When The Freebirds showed up to gloat over their victory at the following press conference, they faced a room of hostile faces. Soon, the encounter turned from an interview into a shouting match.

"What kind of slimy question is that?" Roberts soon found himself shouting. "I didn't have anything in my headgear! I don't need to do

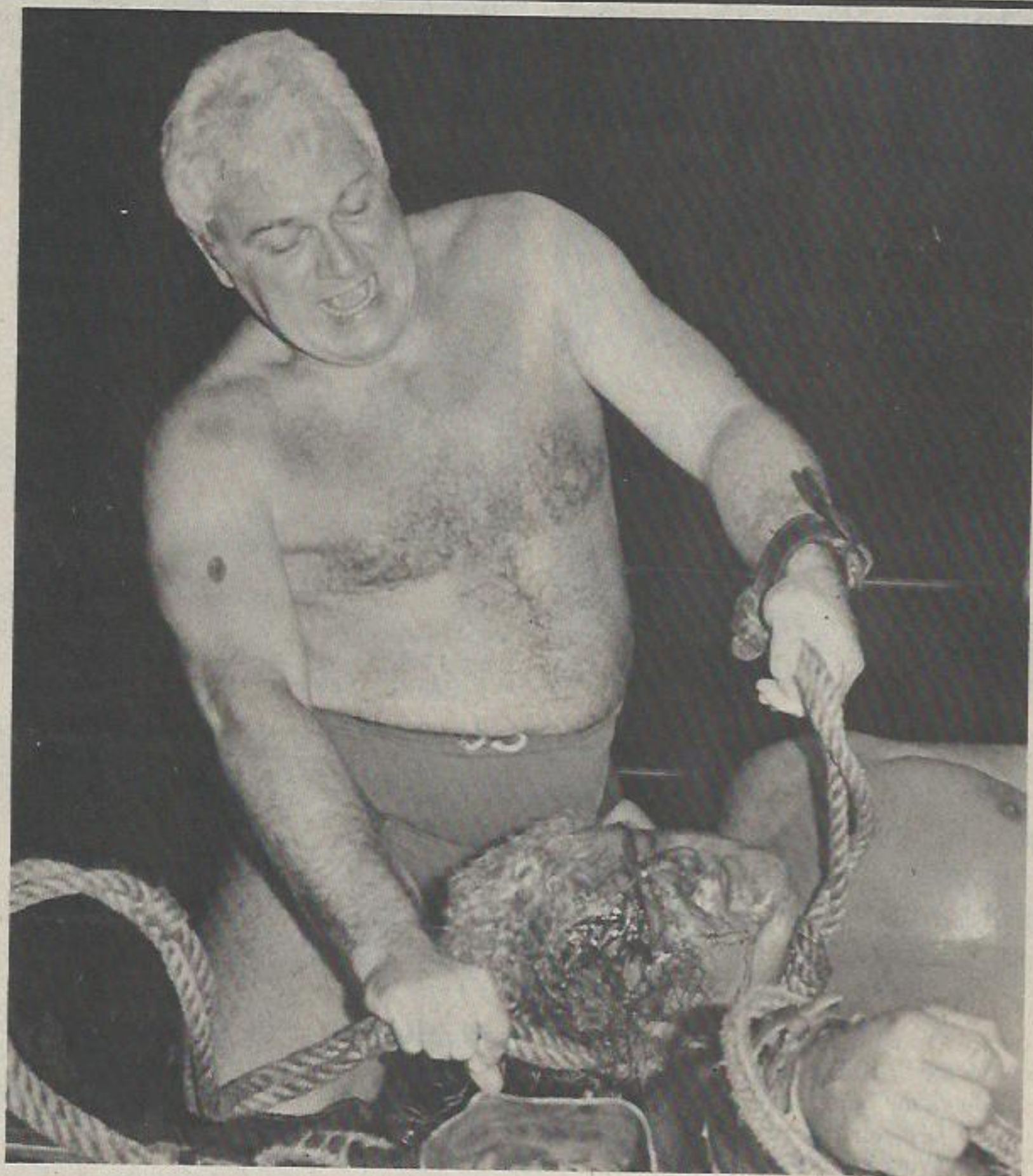
*(Continued on page 62)*



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## Upset Of The Year!

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**HOW J.J. DILLON  
BULLROPED  
DUSTY RHODES**





Rhodes suffered severe facial cuts in his earlier Texas Bullrope Match with Ron Bass, and it didn't take J.J. Dillon long to reopen those cuts (opposite page). Despite his weakened condition, Dusty fights back valiantly (left and above).

**“D**USTY RHODES HAS been defeated! I'm the new king of the Bullrope Match!”

J.J. Dillon's joy on a recent segment of *Championship Wrestling From Florida* was punctuated by program host Gordon Solie's look of disgust. Their respective emotions came after the playing of a videotape of a particularly bloody and brutal match that took

referee's hand *did* hit the canvas three times and Dillon was on top of Rhodes and Dusty's shoulders were flat on the mat . . . but there's more to the story than just that. Much more.

“I'll do whatever I have to do to get Dillon out of Florida for good!”

That's a cry that Dusty has repeated time and time again over the past year. Toward achieving that end, he coura-

Rhodes would have little to gain from this first match: Bass' Southern title would not be on the line and, worse, this match would also be a grueling Texas Bullrope battle. But for the opportunity to get Dillon in a match in which the manager would have to leave Florida indefinitely if he were to lose, Dusty would have wrestled 10 Texas Bullrope Matches beforehand.

## **When Dusty Rhodes engaged J.J. Dillon in a Texas Bullrope Match, it was with the intention of teaching Dillon a lesson in defeat. But with the help of Ron Bass, Dillon wound up being the one doing the teaching, and the “American Dream” soon found himself an honor student in bloodshed**

place in Florida's Lakeland Civic Center.

“Rhodes is finished!” Dillon declared joyfully as Southern champion Ron Bass, sitting beside him, smiled. “If he wants a rematch, he'll have to work his way back up the ladder of contention, he'll have to prove his worth to me. I'm the new king of the Bullrope Match, and I've proved it to the world by scoring a clear-cut victory over Rhodes!”

Technically, Dillon was correct. The

geously signed a contract with Dillon that would place the two men in the ring against each other in one of the most vicious specialty matches in professional wrestling: the Texas Bullrope Match.

Though Dusty Rhodes is an acknowledged master of this type of match, it would not be an easy night for him. Before he would have the opportunity to get the hated manager in the ring, he would first have to wrestle Dillon's charge Ron Bass.

Observers of the Florida wrestling scene claimed that the contract was an unfair way of forcing Dusty to wrestle twice in one night, and of forcing him to face Dillon in a physically weakened state after being pummelled by Bass.

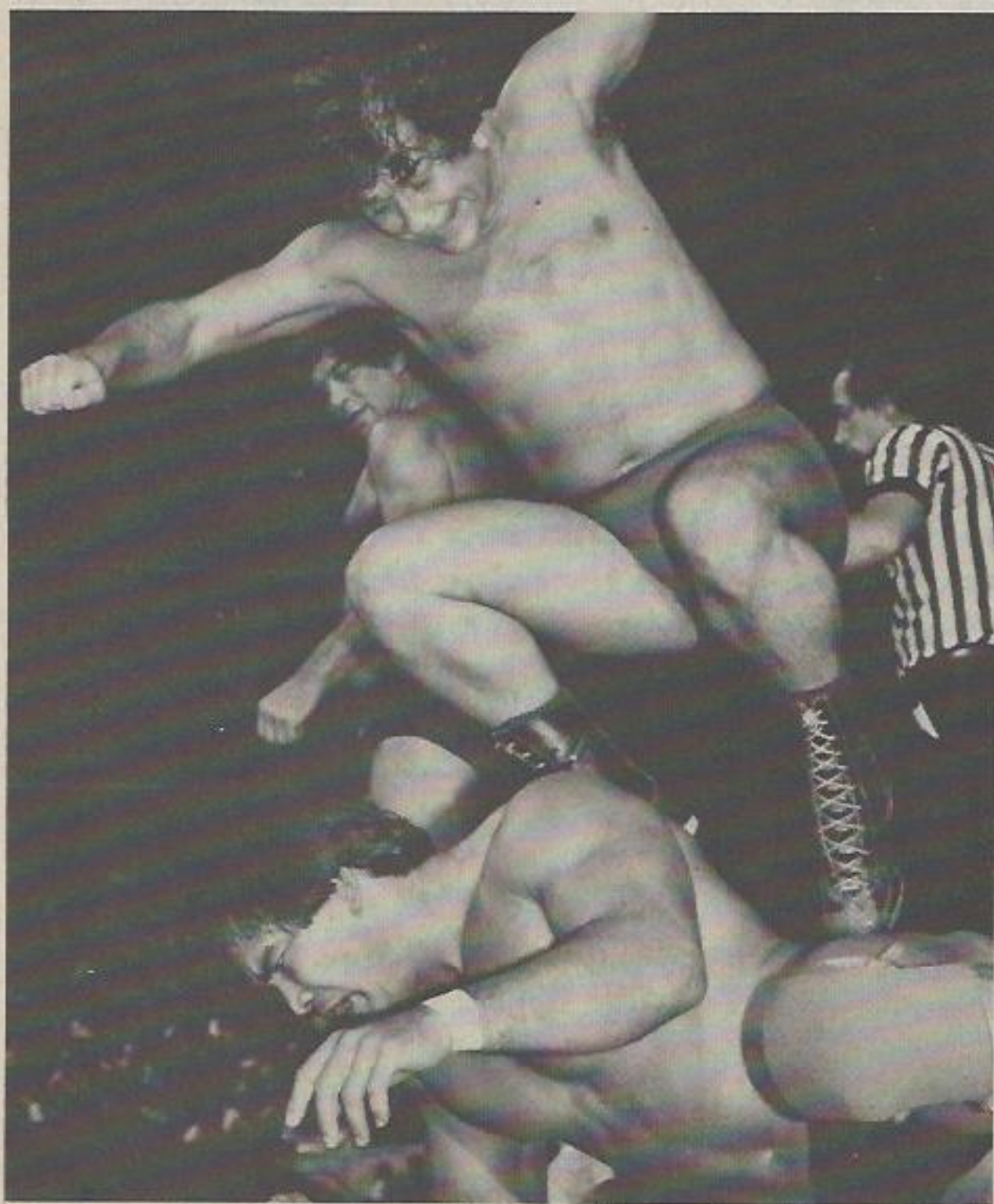
Dillon counters that charge by correctly pointing out that Rhodes didn't have to sign the contract if he didn't want to.

“I think the problem was that Rhodes was very enthusiastic about  
(Continued on page 64)



# LOOKING AT...

## Matt Brock:



Jack Brisco is led out of the ring by the referee as brother Jerry continues to brutalize Rick Steamboat. The Briscos had been double-teaming Rick.

**M**Y UNWRITTEN RULE is that I never write about a tag team in this column. But this month I have to make an exception. The disappointment is too great.

That's right, disappointment.

You see, I was hoping that what Jack and Jerry Brisco were doing in the ring lately would only be temporary. I didn't relish the idea of seeing two of the most knowledgeable scientific wrestlers in the entire world stoop to having to break opponents' legs in order to win matches.

And there's no question about it, Jack and Jerry are two of the best technical wrestlers around.

Both were scholarship wrestlers at Oklahoma State after winning state high school titles. Jack was the NCAA champion at 191 pounds in 1965. That should give you some idea of the amateur experience of these gentlemen ... but they're gentlemen no longer.

As you already know, Jack and Jerry have opted to go for blood. They were angered at the fact that they couldn't get a title shot against the NWA World tag team champions Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood. So they took



## JACK AND JERRY BRISCO



their anger out on men like Johnny Weaver—they broke his leg. And on Youngblood himself—they cracked five of his ribs.

They got their title match, and they got the NWA World tag team belts, but the belts are stained with the blood and pain of men they stepped on as they bruised and battered their way to a title they've deserved for a long time.

But did they really want to capture the belts that way? Do they really want to hold on to the belts knowing how they won them?

So far, they do, and that's what really disappoints me. Jack and Jerry are so much better than all that. They know how to wrestle, they have the skills to defeat any team in the world, they deserve to be champions.

Some people are blaming Youngblood and Steamboat for the Briscos' change of attitude. They say that if Youngblood and Steamboat had given the Briscos the title match they deserved, there would have been no cause for Jack and Jerry to turn bad. I reject that theory.

First, I don't think Rick and Jay were trying to avoid the Briscos. The Briscos, for some reason, were very impatient about the whole thing. If they had just waited, I'm sure they would have eventually gotten their chance to wrestle for the title. Second, even if Steamboat and Youngblood did consciously freeze the Briscos out of the title picture, they didn't hold a gun to their heads and force them to become cruel, vicious men.

Yes, I'm disappointed in Jack and Jerry Brisco. For years they've stood as shining examples of all that was good and proper about professional wrestling. They've wiped out their reputations over the course of just a few months.

Fortunately, there's still time for them to turn back. Unfortunately, I don't think they will. □



Jerry Brisco illegally holds Bob Orton by his hair on the ring apron while Jack pounds away at the Cowboy's back from behind.



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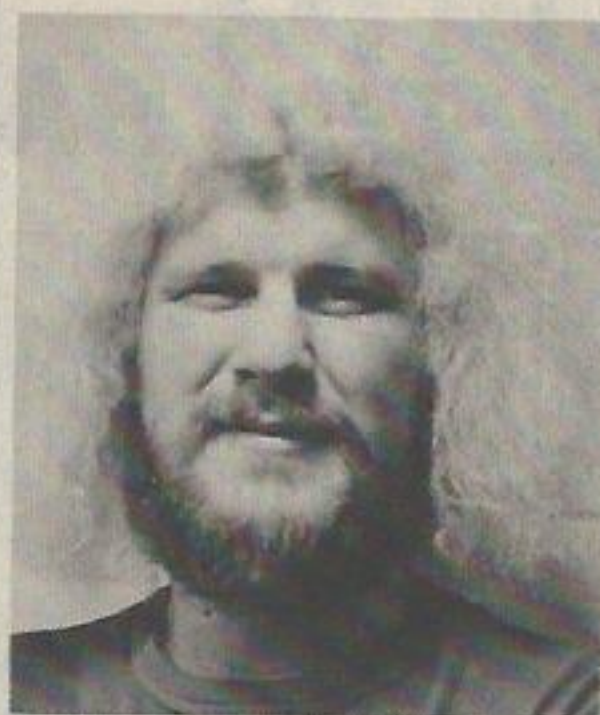
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## RINGSIDE

(Continued from page 8)



David Schultz is united with Mr. Saito in their hatred for Hulk Hogan.

in the dressing room area," Saito said, "and we discovered that we are united in our hatred for **Hulk Hogan**." Hogan has already said that he is willing to wrestle them both in a Texas Tornado Handicap Match, meaning both wrestlers can stay in the ring at the same time . . . The much-anticipated reunion between **Blackjack Lanza** and **Blackjack Mulligan** took place recently in St. Louis. "It was just like old times, like we'd never been apart," Lanza said after The Blackjacks' match with **David Von Erich** and **Jerry Lawler**. In fact, the duo had been apart for several years following Lanza's temporary retirement. NWA President **Bob Geigel**, on hand for the reunion, said, "They were as aggressive and coordinated as they were in the past. If they stay together, I don't see why they couldn't make a run at a major tag team title."

**Gen. Skandor Akbar** says he will give North American champion **Butch Reed** \$25,000 if he can end the career of **Hacksaw Duggan**. "Duggan has been a thorn in my side ever since I came to the Mid-South," Akbar contends. "At one time he pretended to be my friend, but it was all a sham. As far as I'm concerned, it

would be worth 25-grand to see Duggan eliminated from wrestling forever" . . . Speaking of Reed, **Mil Mascaras** has been gunning for a shot at the North American title. It would be a great athletic contest, matching the incredible speed and strength of both wrestlers.

**Ted DiBiase** says the reason he's going to Georgia is not because he lost a Loser Leave Town Match in Texas against **Hacksaw Duggan**, but because he's after **Mr. Wrestling II**. "That masked pain in the butt is telling everyone who will listen how he defeated me and humiliated me all across Louisiana and Texas," DiBiase said. "I intend to wrestle him in front of his hometown crowd in Atlanta's Omni and prove to those stupid fans precisely what kind of a liar that old man is."

During a recent match in which "**Gorgeous**" **Jim Garvin** was wrestling **David Von Erich**, Garvin had managed to capture



A slick move by David Von Erich caused Sunshine to accidentally slap Gorgeous Jim Garvin.



David in a full-nelson. Garvin yelled to his valet, **Sunshine**, to come in and smack David in the face. David ducked and Sunshine smacked Garvin in the kisser! . . . Former AWA World champion **Otto Wanz** has signed for an upcoming series of Battle Royals throughout the Midwest. He says he has a surprise for the American fans, claiming that he "has lost two



Former AWA World champion Otto Wanz, now two whole pounds lighter, has returned to the Midwest.

pounds!" . . . **"Hangman"** Bobby Jagers says his next match against Southwest champion **Tully Blanchard** will be the one in which he finally wins the belt. "I've gotten a restraining order from the Commissioner of Southwest Championship Wrestling, **Lou Thesz**, that will keep Tully's manager, **Chris Love**, away from the ring," Jagers says. "His interference cost me the belt before, but that can't happen now."

This just in: As we were going to press, we heard from reliable sources that **Rick Steamboat** is preparing to retire from wrestling. We called Steamboat to ask him about the situation, and he responded, "No comment." That's far from a denial. We'll have more details on this next month.

That's all for now. See you at ringside! □

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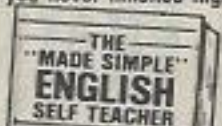
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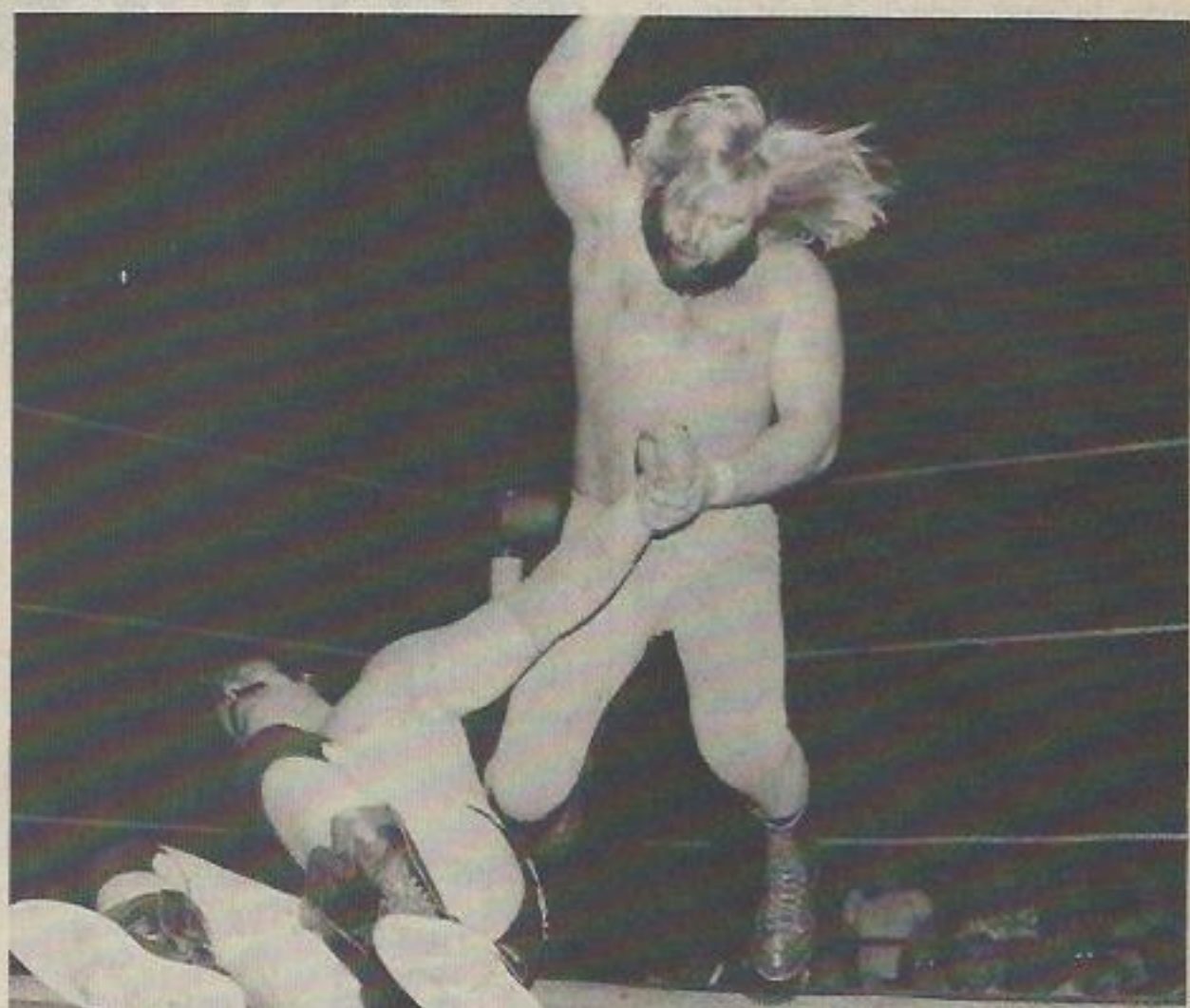
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## KING'S COURT

(Continued from page 10)



Wrestling against the 6'7" Blackjack Mulligan in 1981 was good preparation for Studd's current series of matches against Andre the Giant. Will Big John be the first man to defeat the Giant?

the opportunity came too late in the match. I was so tired by then, my maneuvers were a little sloppy. But I know I'm gonna get him next time. You see, Fred Blassie has a theory. He claims that in any match, no matter who the opponent, there will be at least one golden opportunity for victory. That means that even a prelim guy could defeat a great wrestler like me. Obviously, the better a wrestler you are, the more opportunities you get. But even in a match where one guy is vastly superior, Freddie figures there's an opportunity for victory that lasts for no more than three seconds. That's three seconds out of an hour match, three seconds of opportunity for every 3,597 seconds where there can be no victory."

Studd put his wrestling boots in his equipment bag only to find he could no longer zip the bag shut. He turned the bag upside down and shook all the contents out. He then proceeded to repack it.

"Now, I'm one of the greatest wrestlers in history," Studd continued. "But even if I were just a prelim scrub,

there still should be three seconds in every match against Andre where I should be able to unload and pin the geek. I've got to grab the opportunity when it comes. It's as simple as that."

Studd finished packing, and this time the bag closed easily. As he turned to leave, Studd said, "Many people say to me, 'Why wrestle that freak every night? You should go after easier meat, like that creep Backlund.' But I want to be the man who defeats Andre the Giant. And as soon as I hear from Freddie later tonight, he's gonna say, 'Studd, did you beat him tonight?' And I'll tell him no. And then Freddie will say, 'Studd, do you want another shot at him?' And I'll tell Freddie to sign the papers. I'm close to defeating Andre, and everyone in wrestling knows it. Next time. I can't wait until next time."

By the time I got to Andre's dressing room, the Giant had dressed and left. But even though I didn't get to see him, I could almost hear the Giant's weary words after the match: "Studd, Studd, Studd. Every night, it's John Studd." □



## DRESSING ROOM CONFIDENTIAL

(Continued from page 12)

wrong about that. (DiBiase drew a strange look from the bartender every time he ordered himself a club soda with a twist.)

It was Saturday night and no coincidence that *World Championship Wrestling* from Georgia was playing on the TV set over the bar. At the time of our meeting, Ted was in the final stages of his negotiations with Georgia promoters, and it was well known among the wrestling public that he would soon be making his return to the area. Ted had some thoughts on one of the men he was sure to face in Georgia and he wanted to make them known to the public through this column.

DiBiase's eyes became slits as he saw that man interviewed by the show's host, Gordon Solie. The man, wearing white trunks, white boots, and a white mask was holding up the National championship belt and talking in an uncharacteristically harsh tone. "As long as I hold on to this belt," he said looking directly into the TV camera, "the fans can be sure that the National championship won't be disgraced."

"That's terrible," DiBiase said, slamming his previously full glass of club soda on the bar. "This guy is such a phony, it's sickening. First he steals the National title belt away from its rightful owner, Larry Zbyszko, and then he has the gall to come on TV and tell the fans that what he is doing is for them. What he did is criminal and he should be punished for it. Instead, he comes out of this thing smelling like a rose. Half the fans think he's saving the honor of the National championship, and the other half thinks he's actually the champion. He's fooled the fans with this Mr. Righteous act for years."

There are a lot of wrestlers who hate Mr. Wrestling II, but few hate him as passionately as DiBiase.

Wrestling II represents something to DiBiase that Ted is afraid to face. What DiBiase sees in Wrestling II is what Ted would have become had he remained a fan favorite. Ted used to talk about Mr. Wrestling II more than any other wrestler. He idolized the man and admitted to wanting to be just like him. When DiBiase and Wrestling II met each other in the ring a few years back, it was one of the most thrilling matches I have ever witnessed. Ted didn't win the match, but he got more out of that one loss than he would 10 wins against anyone else. Early in the match, Ted was obviously awed by his idol. But as the match progressed, so did DiBiase. By the end, he no longer viewed Mr. Wrestling II as a legend, but as he really was: an honest professional, who, through hard work and respect for the rulebook, had become one of the sport's superstars. With that gained awareness, DiBiase came out of that match holding Mr. Wrestling II in even higher esteem that he had before.

Why DiBiase no longer feels as he did about II, or about the sport of wrestling, is still unclear. The accepted explanation is Ted had grown impatient with his career and sought a quicker route to success. But that's probably an oversimplification of a very complex issue.

Whatever the reason for his current attitude, one result is clear: DiBiase is obsessed with the destruction of Mr. Wrestling II. Knowing Ted the way I do, I find that distressing but not difficult to understand. DiBiase views Mr. Wrestling II as the last remaining thread in his rip with the past. Wrestling II still gets to Ted DiBiase. More precisely, he still gets to the old Ted DiBiase. And he's probably the only one who still does. □

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## ON ASSIGNMENT

(Continued from page 18)



Sunshine is finding that leading cheers for Garvin is a difficult task. She will also find that if she's going to continue to interfere in matches that David Von Erich is wrestling in, she will be taking personal risks.

damage from the clawhold or something. I'm not the villain here, it's Jim Garvin's fault. If he didn't have to keep hiding behind that valet of his, I wouldn't have to take matters into my own hands the way I did."

I pointed out that it seemed pretty unnecessary for a 250-pound wrestler to have to physically assault a 120-pound woman for any reason.

"No, I didn't *have* to do anything to her," David said defensively. "I could have let her alone, could have let her continue to interfere in my matches against Garvin, but quite frankly, Liz, she was getting too big for her britches. She's a snotty little kid who needed to be taught a lesson. I decided I had to be the one to teach her that lesson."

Now I suppose that's an adequate explanation, but would David spank Sunshine again under the same circumstances?

"Hell yes, if she interfered in my match and cost me a victory, I damn well would," he told me.

"Listen, she's got to learn that if she's going to interfere in matches, she's going to have to suffer the consequences."

I told David that a lot of wrestling fans have lost respect for him because of what he's done.

"That's something that each individual wrestling fan has to consider," David said. "I'm not going to try to make up their minds for them. If a fan wants to think worse of me because I went ahead and did what I thought was necessary, that's up to him or her."

Several fans pointed out the possibility in their letters that David could possibly lose his temper and do some real damage to Sunshine?

"Hey, that's a chance *she's* taking, not me," he responded.

David then apologized for cutting the phone call short, saying that he wanted to get back to the weights before he became too rested. I said I'd talk to him again soon and I hung up the receiver.

I looked up and there was Farhood leaning in the doorway. When Farhood wrote this column and I was just starting out, I guess you could say we were an item.

"Long time no see, Liz."

I was silent. There were still some bad vibes between us, and I didn't feel like forcing a confrontation.

"Just using the phone for a minute," I told him. "In fact, I'm on my way out right now. See you again sometime."

I tried to put Farhood out of my mind as I walked to the train station to return home. I thought about David Von Erich, but that gave me bad vibes, too.

I suppose he was justified for what he did, but I just can't condone a muscular wrestler hitting a relatively frail woman, no matter *what* the motivation might have been.





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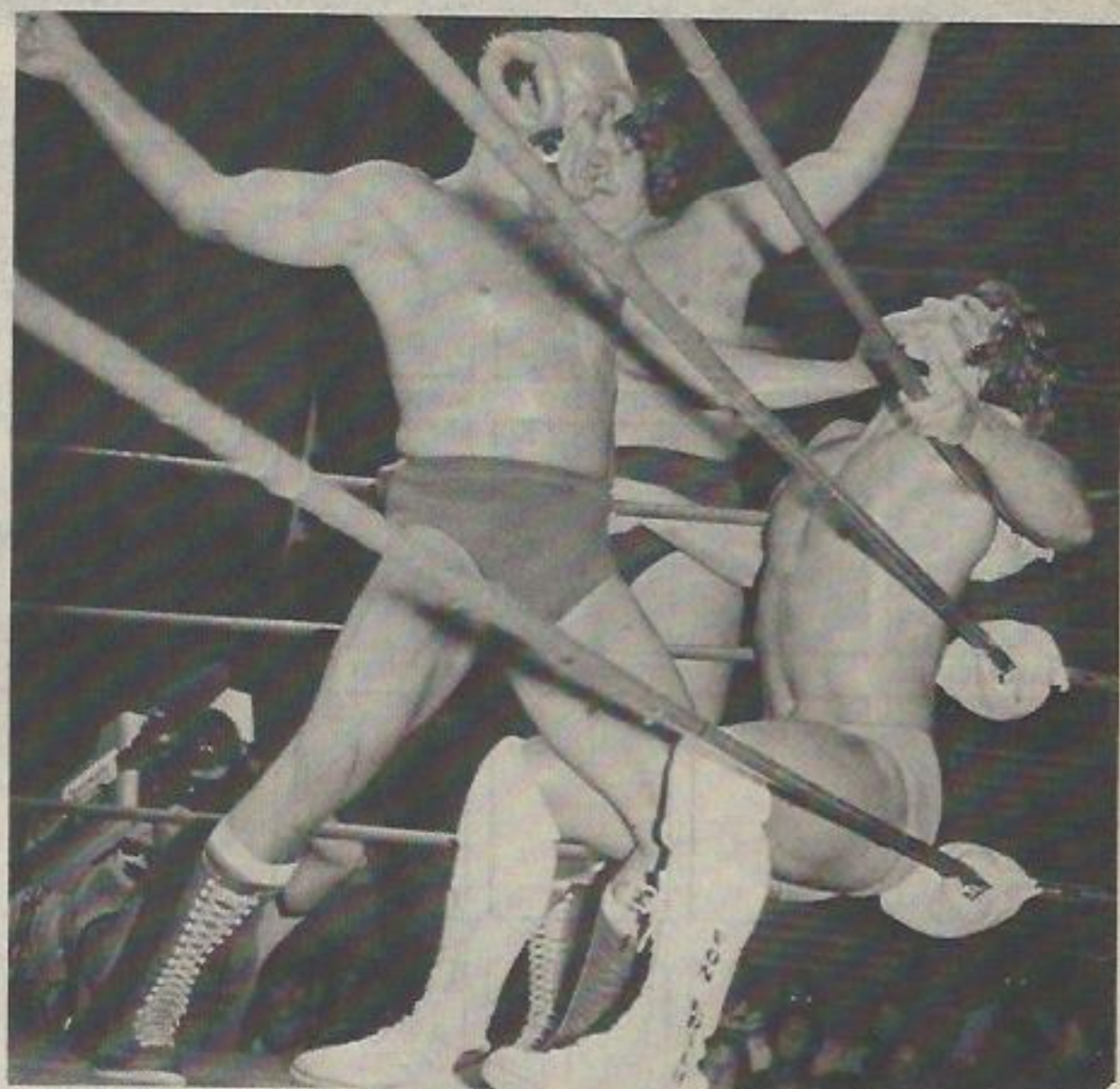
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## THE FREEBIRDS

(Continued from page 45)



Roberts, having already landed the fateful headbutt, cruelly continues his attack against a semiconscious Kerry. The manner in which The Freebirds won the six-man title has elevated their feud with the Von Erichs to new heights.

that, especially against wimps like the Von Erichs. I have the best damn headbutt in wrestling. When that punk Kerry gets his senses back, you can ask him. I never loaded my headgear in my life. That would be cheating.

"My headgear is worn because of instructions from my doctor. I don't know the technical name for my ailment, but it's very serious. It's an act of great courage for me to wrestle at all."

"You slobs wouldn't know about courage," said Michael Hayes, the diplomat of the group. "Buddy loves wrestling too much to quit, which is why he risks his life, yes, risks his life, every time he steps into the ring. Instead of applauding his bravery, you punks insult him and falsely accuse him of cheating. This entire interview is a disgrace!"

Without saying another word, Hayes, Roberts, and their partner,

Terry Gordy, left the room. Though other questions were shouted at them, the trio ignored the taunting voices. At the door, however, they did make a response. Turning to the reporters, they held the belts high over their heads and laughed. Theirs were cold, ugly laughs, the kind that says they are better than you, better than your rules, and bigger than your justice. Holding the belts high as proof of this, they turned and left.

This left the reporters to write their stories. They would begin by stating the inescapable fact that The Freebirds were the new World Class six-man tag team champions. Then they'd explain that the result was controversial, as Buddy Roberts allegedly put a steel plate in his headgear. That would leave them free to praise the Von Erichs' losing effort.

For before Kerry was felled by



the mysterious headbutt, the Von Erichs put on a brilliant exhibition of wrestling virtuosity. They overwhelmed The Freebirds time and again. The Freebirds barely survived during the first 15 minutes, always on the defensive. It looked like the Von Erichs were going to have an easy time of it.

Then The Freebirds began their real dirty work. Fans were horrified as they coldly flouted the rules. The most brutally illegal maneuvers were used time and again. Still, the Von Erichs persevered.

Then came the headbutt. There was sickening crack as Robert's headgear smashed into Kerry's skull. Kerry went down as if he'd been shot. Three seconds later, the match was over.

The Freebirds have won the six-man tag team title, but they've won something else as well. The Von Erichs hate their guts and have sworn revenge. Their long war has entered a second stage. One in which no prisoners will be taken. □

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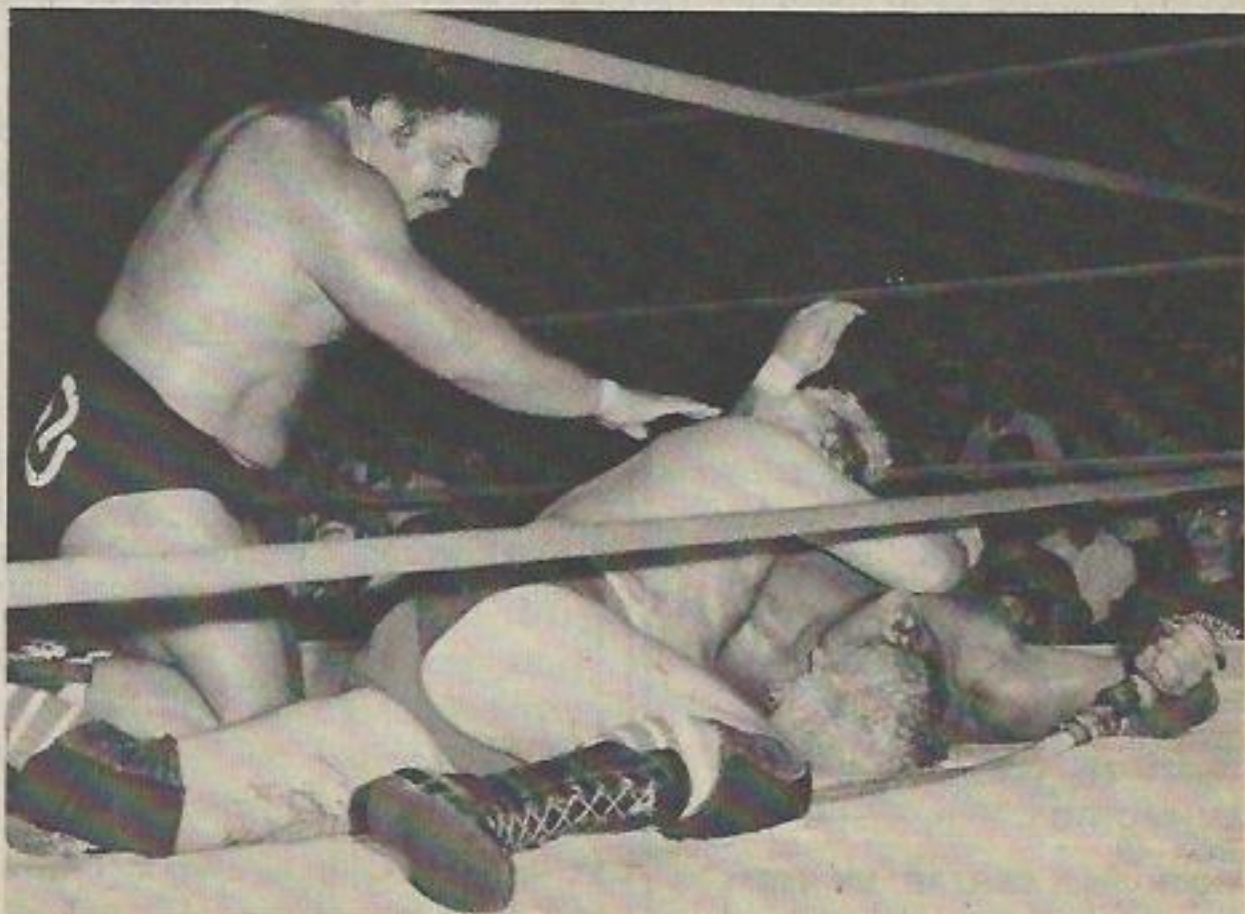
## RHODES VS. DILLON

(Continued from page 47)



With Dillon (foreground) and referee Bill Alphonso both out cold, Bass comes into the ring and piledrives Rhodes.

having an opportunity—about having any opportunity—to get Dillon out of Florida," Gordon Solie told *Pro Wrestling Illustrated*. "Frankly, I think his enthusiasm blinded him to the fact that he could get seriously hurt in wrestling two Bullrope Matches against two different opponents in one night. Signing that contract was a brave move, but it was also a very dangerous move."



Dangerous or not, Dusty eagerly stepped into the ring with Ron Bass, as the first phase of his wrestling activity for the evening began.

Only a few minutes into the match, Dusty was reeling, his face a mask of blood from the brutal punishment Bass inflicted. It seemed unthinkable that Rhodes would even be able to come back to defeat Bass, much less be able to wage any sort of an offensive attack on Dillon once the second match began.

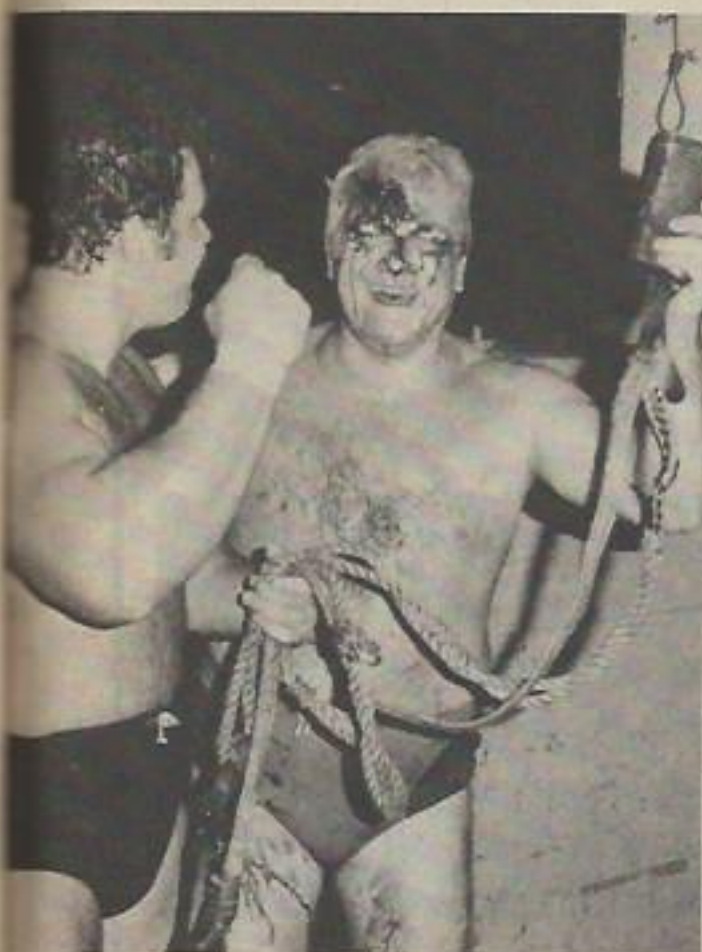
Nevertheless, Rhodes was able to summon a deep reserve of willpower and strength, and rallied back with several powerful blows to Bass' head. To the rousing cheers of the thousands of fans on hand, Rhodes managed to defeat the Southern champion.

Rhodes would not get a rest period before the second match. Dillon charged into the ring, strapped the bullrope around his arm, and, catching Dusty completely off-guard, managed to wrap the rope itself around the Dream's neck.

But it wasn't long before Dusty's enthusiasm, fueled by the support of the crowd, enabled him to escape the

After placing Dillon on top of Rhodes, Bass will grab Alphonso and force his hand to the mat three times for the count.





Dillon celebrates his tainted victory with Bass before receiving medical attention for his cuts.

chokehold and launch a counterattack. Seconds later, Dillon found himself battered and bloodied, on his back and nearly unconscious.

Dusty turned to acknowledge the cheers of the crowd when, suddenly and without warning, Bass sneaked up behind him (knocking referee Bill Alphonso to the canvas in the process) and caught him with a devastating piledriver.

With Dusty, Dillon, and the referee stunned, Bass proceeded to rearrange the situation to his own liking: He turned Dusty over on his back, dragged Dillon over to Rhodes, and deposited him on top of the American Dream. Bass then carried Alphonso over to where Dillon and Dusty were, held Alphonso's hand, and forced him to make the three-count on Rhodes.

Later, in the dressing room, Dillon and Bass celebrated the "victory." Dillon began singing his own praises by claiming to be the "New King of the Bullrope Match."

J.J. Dillon may have scored a technical victory over Dusty Rhodes, but it will take a lot more than the underhanded aid of Ron Bass to prove Dillon superior to Rhodes—in a Bullrope Match, in the hearts of the fans, or anywhere else. □

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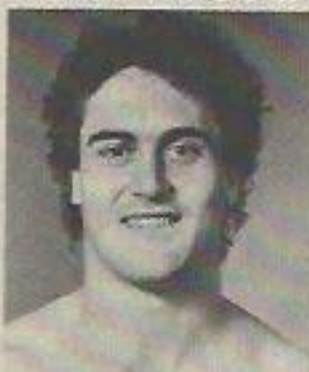




# RATINGS ANALYSIS

**Every month, this column will tell fans how we go about rating more than 150 wrestlers in 14 different categories. It is a behind-the-scenes look at the most important—and respected—ratings system in the sport. This column is vital reading for all wrestling fans**

**Some new faces:** New faces can be seen in various categories throughout the ratings this month. Here's a quick rundown of the new entries:



*Mike Rotondo*

**Barry Windham** enters the Top 10 after impressive showings against Southern champion Ron Bass, Florida champion Jos LeDuc, and NWA World champion Harley Race ... **Buzz Tyler** and **Bulldog Bob Brown**, who currently hold both the Central States and Canadian International tag team belts, have captured the number 10 spot in the tag team ratings ... **Mike Rotondo**, now in the Florida area, enters the ratings in the number 10 spot ... "The Continental Lover," **Eddy Mansfield**, is back in the U.S. and in the number 10 position in Southwest ratings ... **Charlie Brown**, a new man in the Mid-Atlantic area, has demonstrated a high degree of skill and expertise in the ring and enters the area ratings in the number 10 spot ... You can read about **The Freebirds** regaining the World Class six-man tag team belts from The Von Erichs on page 44; you can see them back in the tag team ratings in the number six position.

**Some old faces in some new places:** Part of what makes professional wrestling ratings so interesting for the fans is being able to compare this month's ratings with last month's ratings ... or last year's, for that matter.

From time to time, "Ratings Analysis" will select several wrestlers and compare their rankings from last month to those of this month, noting what all fans should be aware of: the relative movements of particular wrestlers within categories over a period of time.

**Rick Martel** drops from number two in the AWA to number four due to his involvement in tag team matches with Dino Bravo and his lack of title shots against Nick Bockwinkel ... **Hulk Hogan**, not rated in the AWA last month, makes his reappearance at the number one position following an astounding return engagement and several top matches throughout the association ... Because of the aid he has given wrestlers such as Dusty Rhodes, Barry Windham, and Blackjack Mulligan across Florida, **Angelo Mosca** edges out of the number seven spot to number six in that state ... No longer the number one contender for Bob Backlund's WWF title, and in fact no longer wrestling in the Northeast, **George Steele** drops from the WWF listings completely ... **Stan Hansen** has left the U.S. for an extended tour of Japan; consequently, he has been dropped from the Southwest area ratings ... **Playboy Buddy Rose's** popularity with the Pacific Northwest fans has apparently aided him in recent battles as has enabled him to rise from fourth to third position in our ratings for that area ... Because of a lack of main-event matches over the past month, **Ivan Koloff** has been dropped from number five to number 10 in the WWF area. □



# PRO Wrestling ILLUSTRATED

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Ratings are based on won-lost records for the past month, quality of opposition, and the inherent skill of each wrestler. These ratings are compiled by the editors and are universally recognized as official.



Nick Bockwinkel



Barry Windham

## TOP 10

- |                                             |                                            |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| 1—HARLEY RACE<br>253, Kansas City, MO       | 6—BOB BACKLUND<br>242, Princeton, MN       |
| 2—ANDRE THE GIANT<br>497, Grenoble, France  | 7—MIL MASCARAS<br>242, Mexico City, Mexico |
| 3—DUSTY RHODES<br>302, Austin, TX           | 8—BARRY WINDHAM<br>230, Sweetwater, TX     |
| 4—NICK BOCKWINKEL<br>245, Beverly Hills, CA | 9—HULK HOGAN<br>320, Venice Beach, CA      |
| 5—RIC FLAIR<br>243, Minneapolis, MN         | 10—DINO BRAVO<br>248, Montreal, Quebec     |

## MOST POPULAR

- 1—ANDRE THE GIANT  
497, Grenoble, France
- 2—DUSTY RHODES  
302, Austin, TX
- 3—RODDY PIPER  
231, Scotland
- 4—JUNKYARD DOG  
260, New Orleans, LA
- 5—JIMMY SNUKA  
250, Fiji Islands
- 6—TOMMY RICH  
238, Hendersonville, TN
- 7—PLAYBOY BUDDY ROSE  
245, Minneapolis, MN
- 8—KERRY VON ERICH  
251, Denton, TX
- 9—BARRY WINDHAM  
230, Sweetwater, TX
- 10—BOB BACKLUND  
242, Princeton, MN

## MOST HATED

- 1—RON BASS  
285, Pampa, FL
- 2—HACKSAW REED  
249, Kansas City, MO
- 3—LARRY ZBYSZKO  
240, Pittsburgh, PA
- 4—BOB SWEETAN  
285, Round Rock, TX
- 5—GREG VALENTINE  
243, Seattle, WA
- 6—TED DIBIASE  
247, Omaha, NE
- 7—BUZZ SAWYER  
240, St. Petersburg, FL
- 8—KEVIN SULLIVAN  
235, Boston, MA
- 9—MAGNIFICENT MURACO  
262, Sunset Beach, HI
- 10—ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER  
360, Sudan

NWA and AWA ratings are compiled with the assistance of wrestlers, promoters, and reporters. "Most Popular" and "Most Hated" ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestling fans and on mail that comes to our offices.

## TAG TEAMS

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- 2—KEN PATERA & CRUSHER BLACKWELL  
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- 3—THE ROAD WARRIORS  
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- 4—ELIJAH AKEEM & KAREEM MUHAMMAD  
Combined Weight: 578 pounds
- 5—TERRY ALLEN & HACKSAW DUGGAN  
Combined Weight: 525 pounds
- 6—THE FREEBIRDS  
Combined Weight: 791 pounds\*
- 7—THE SAMOANS  
Combined Weight: 598 pounds
- 8—STEVE KEIRN & STAN LANE  
Combined Weight: 479 pounds
- 9—PAT PATTERSON & PIERRE LEFEBVRE  
Combined Weight: 476 pounds
- 10—BUZZ TYLER & BULLDOG BOB BROWN  
Combined Weight: 584 pounds

\*Combined weights reflect three team members

## NWA

World Champion:  
HARLEY RACE

- 253, Kansas City, MO
- 1—GREG VALENTINE  
243, Seattle, WA
  - 2—RIC FLAIR  
243, Minneapolis, MN
  - 3—LARRY ZBYSZKO  
240, Pittsburgh, PA
  - 4—RUFUS R. JONES  
287, Boston, MA
  - 5—RON BASS  
285, Pampa, TX
  - 6—JOS LeDUC  
280, Godbout, Quebec
  - 7—SUPER DESTROYER  
271, parts unknown
  - 8—MR. WRESTLING II  
232, Atlanta, GA
  - 9—DAVID VON ERICH  
247, Denton, TX
  - 10—BOB ARMSTRONG  
229, Marietta, GA

## AWA

World Champion:  
NICK BOCKWINKEL

- 245, Beverly Hills, CA
- 1—HULK HOGAN  
320, Venice Beach, CA
  - 2—MAD DOG VACHON  
225, Algeria
  - 3—MR. SAITO  
247, Japan
  - 4—RICK MARTEL  
236, Quebec City, Quebec
  - 5—WAHOO McDANIEL  
260, Midland, TX
  - 6—KEN PATERA  
256, Portland, OR
  - 7—CRUSHER BLACKWELL  
474, Stone Mountain, GA
  - 8—JESSE VENTURA  
270, Muscle Beach, CA
  - 9—GREG GAGNE  
220, Robinsdale, MN
  - 10—BARON VON RASCHKE  
271, Germany



# OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

Below are the ratings for the top regional wrestling areas of the country. These ratings are based on nationwide surveys of wrestlers, promoters, and reporters.

## WWF

Champion:

**BOB BACKLUND**

242, Princeton, MN

- 1—**MASKED SUPERSTAR**  
282, Atlanta, GA
- 2—**MAGNIFICENT MURACO**  
262, Sunset Beach, HI
- 3—**JIMMY SNUKA**  
250, Fiji Islands
- 4—**SGT. SLAUGHTER**  
310, Paris Island, SC
- 5—**JOHN STUDD**  
364, Washington, DC
- 6—**TITO SANTANA**  
245, Mission, TX
- 7—**ROCKY JOHNSON**  
244, Washington, DC
- 8—**TONY ATLAS**  
247, Roanoke, VA
- 9—**IVAN PUTSKI**  
242, Krakow, Poland
- 10—**IVAN KOLOFF**  
249, Russia

## GEORGIA

- 1—**LARRY ZBYSKO**  
240, Pittsburgh, PA
- 2—**MR. WRESTLING II**  
232, Atlanta, GA
- 3—**TOMMY RICH**  
238, Hendersonville, TN
- 4—**BUZZ SAWYER**  
240, St. Petersburg, FL
- 5—**GREG VALENTINE**  
243, Seattle, WA
- 6—**PEZ WHATLEY**  
238, El Paso, TX
- 7—**RODDY PIPER**  
231, Scotland
- 8—**RONNIE GARVIN**  
231, Montreal, Quebec
- 9—**BRETT WAYNE**  
242, St. Petersburg, FL
- 10—**OLE ANDERSON**  
256, Minneapolis, MN

## WORLD CLASS

- 1—**JIM GARVIN**  
235, Tampa, FL
- 2—**DAVID VON ERICH**  
247, Denton, TX
- 3—**KEVIN VON ERICH**  
254, Denton, TX
- 4—**MICHAEL HAYES**  
255, Marietta, GA
- 5—**KERRY VON ERICH**  
251, Denton, TX
- 6—**MIL MASCARAS**  
242, Mexico City, Mexico
- 7—**KAMALA**  
360, Uganda
- 8—**ICEMAN PARSONS**  
242, St. Louis, MO
- 9—**BUDDY ROBERTS**  
247, Del City, OK
- 10—**TERRY GORDY**  
289, Chattanooga, TN

## MID-ATLANTIC

- 1—**GREG VALENTINE**  
243, Seattle, WA
- 2—**RUFUS R. JONES**  
287, Boston, MA
- 3—**RODDY PIPER**  
231, Scotland
- 4—**BUGSY McGRAW**  
245, New York, NY
- 5—**THE GREAT KABUKI**  
252, Singapore
- 6—**DORY FUNK, JR.**  
244, Amarillo, TX
- 7—**BOB ORTON, JR.**  
245, Kansas City, KS
- 8—**JACK BRISCO**  
232, Blackwell, OK
- 9—**DICK SLATER**  
235, Tampa, FL
- 10—**CHARLIE BROWN**  
251, New York, NY

## FLORIDA

- 1—**RON BASS**  
285, Pampa, TX
- 2—**JOS LeDUC**  
280, Godbout, Quebec
- 3—**DUSTY RHODES**  
302, Austin, TX
- 4—**BARRY WINDHAM**  
230, Sweetwater, TX
- 5—**MIKE GRAHAM**  
232, Tampa, FL
- 6—**ANGELO MOSCA**  
309, Caledon, Ontario
- 7—**KEVIN SULLIVAN**  
235, Boston, MA
- 8—**THE PURPLE HAZE**  
235, Buffalo, NY
- 9—**SCOTT McGHEE**  
220, Shipley, England
- 10—**MIKE ROTONDO**  
245, Syracuse, NY

## MID-SOUTH

- 1—**HACKSAW REED**  
249, Kansas City, MO
- 2—**JUNKYARD DOG**  
260, New Orleans, LA
- 3—**HACKSAW DUGGAN**  
280, New York, NY
- 4—**MIL MASCARAS**  
242, Mexico City, Mexico
- 5—**MR. WRESTLING II**  
232, Atlanta, GA
- 6—**KING KONG BUNDY**  
420, Atlantic City, NJ
- 7—**MR. FUJI**  
232, Japan
- 8—**TED DIBIASE**  
247, Omaha, NE
- 9—**KAMALA**  
360, Uganda
- 10—**TERRY ALLEN**  
245, Chesapeake, VA

## SOUTHWEST

- 1—**ADRIAN ADONIS**  
251, New York, NY
- 2—**TULLY BLANCHARD**  
235, San Antonio, TX
- 3—**BOB SWEETAN**  
285, Round Rock, TX
- 4—**ERIC EMBRY**  
225, Lexington, KY
- 5—**BOBBY JAGGERS**  
255, Dunlap, KS
- 6—**SCOTT CASEY**  
235, Amarillo, TX
- 7—**TIGER CONWAY, JR.**  
230, Houston, TX
- 8—**SWEET BROWN SUGAR**  
226, Dallas, TX
- 9—**AL PEREZ**  
234, Tampa, FL
- 10—**EDDY MANSFIELD**  
230, Beverly Hills, CA

## NORTHWEST

- 1—**CURT HENNIG**  
235, Minneapolis, MN
- 2—**THE ASSASSIN**  
240, parts unknown
- 3—**PLAYBOY BUDDY ROSE**  
245, Minneapolis, MN
- 4—**RIP OLIVER**  
245, Tampa, FL
- 5—**BILLY JACK**  
245, Portland, OR
- 6—**AL MADRIL**  
235, Los Angeles, CA
- 7—**RON RITCHIE**  
238, New York, NY
- 8—**MATT BORNE**  
240, Milwaukie, OR
- 9—**BRIAN ADIDAS**  
238, Dallas, TX
- 10—**CHIEF TAPU**  
228, Samoa